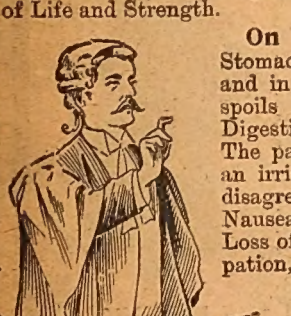
SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 546. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 17TH, 1899. [ONE PENNY.

Helping the Stomach.

The Stomach is like "Fire," or "Water," a good friend, but a bad master. As a friend it craves work to do, which is shown by good Appetite, and it sets about its work with so much energy that we have efficient Digestion, and later on perfect Assimilation—the Source of Life and Strength.



On the other hand the Stomach as a master works fitfully and in a sulky manner. This soon spoils the Appetite and ruins the Digestion. Then the suffering begins. The partially-digested food becomes an irritant, and we have a host of disagreeable Symptoms, such as Nausea, Flatulence, Distension, Pain, Loss of Appetite, Headache, Constipation, Sleeplessness, and a general tired feeling of Weakness.

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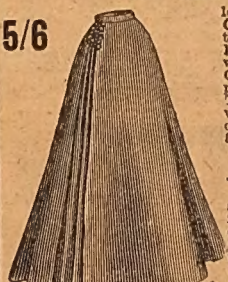

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No. 546.] [Week ending June 17, 1899.

SHORT STORIES

PRIVATE JOHN NORTON.

PRIVATE John Norton was a decided enigma to his comrades of Graham's Light Horse. It was not that he was evidently unused to the rough work that fell to his lot in the way of grooming horses, cleaning stables and harness, and the hundred-and-one odd things that make up the duty of a cavalry trooper, for there were many of his comrades of whom the same may be said.

Nor was it that in the frequent skirmishes with the Mahdi's followers, in which the Light Horse had taken part, Private Norton displayed a dare-devil recklessness which gave one the impression that life was but of little value to him; for many members of that gallant regiment exhibited a reckless dash which was to be attributed to something beside native bravery and pluck, though these, of course, were not lacking.

Nor again, was it only that he jealously guarded the secret of his past life, and could be tempted into no confidence respecting his real name or antecedents, for it was understood in Graham's Horse that nearly every man had a good and sufficient reason for wishing to veil his past history and name from curious eyes.

More probable it was that he seemed to be trying to foster within himself a cold, hard, and cynical disposition, which repelled all approach to friendship, and made good-fellowship impossible. In his creed, goodness, pure motives and disinterested kindness were things that did not exist, while on the subject of friendship or woman's love it was the firm opinion of John Norton's comrades that he was mad, and for some time after he joined it was considered to be a good joke in the messroom or canteen to start some story of devoted friendship or faithful love, just for the sake of hearing the volley of scathing sarcasms with which he greeted such narrations.

But after a time this amusement began to pall, and his furious fulminations were voted a nuisance, whilst he himself was shunned as a moody fellow, whose surly crotchets were not worth considering. As time went on Private Norton was fast becoming one of the most unpopular men in the ranks, for among any body of men, and especially in a camp, the one unforgivable sin is a want of good fellowship.

If a man lack the genial spirit of comradeship, his chance of popularity is very small, and very few of those around him will stay to inquire whether his defect arise from nervousness or moroseness, from the shyness that hinders geniality or the surliness that despises it.

One or two men there were, however, who, being closer observers than the rest, saw that this was not the natural disposition of our friend, and they came to the conclusion that he had had some blow which had changed a naturally sunny nature into that of a carping and bitter cynic, and that because someone in his little world had proved untrue, he was steeling his heart to the belief that unselfishness and faith had left the earth.

One night the camp was quieter than usual, for early the next morning an advance was to be made in force for the purpose of dislodging the Arabs, who were lying in great numbers in the short scrubby bush that surrounded the camp. Private Norton was on sentry duty, and as he paced to and fro no sounds were to be heard except the frequent challenges of the numerous sentries, or here and there from an odd tent the sound of subdued conversation or a low snatch of song.

Very naturally in his lonely walk his thoughts turned to the morrow's fight and its possibilities. Suppose, he thought, that to-morrow night he should be lying somewhere in that scrub with face upturned to the sky.

Ah! well, in that case the bitterness that had been almost too hard to be borne would be at an end, and the feverish load laid down.

And yet, he thought, he would have liked things to be put to rights a little, and his name to be cleared before that happened. Would it ever be? Just then Sergeant Jacques, in a tent close by, troubled by similar thoughts and prevented from sleeping by the picture which would keep rising before his mind of a dear little girl far away in the quiet close under the shadow of the mighty minster, broke out into a song, which was fervent enough for a prayer,

"Some day, some day, some day I shall meet you,
Love, I know not when or how."

So he sang, little dreaming that the words came as a message to the heart of a comrade a few yards away. When John Norton caught the words he stopped short, and his carbine almost slipped from his nerveless hand. That song, on this night, too, of all others; and then as the song went on he forgot his surroundings, and his thoughts flew on, away from the rows of tents, away over the bushes that hid the enemy, past the sandy dunes that took such queer shapes in the dim light of the cloudy moon, beyond the far-off mountains standing like some dark barriers against the sky, away to the busy town in Yorkshire, where he had last heard that song.

Only eight months ago he had stood, full of confident trust and love, by the side of her to whom he had given his heart, while she sang this very song, and now—well, now he was Private Norton, of the Light Horse, for whom life held no hope, and death no terror.

And still in his tent, sleepless, Sergeant Jacques crooned out his song:—

"But when we meet some day, some day,
Eyes, clearer grown, the truth may see,
And every cloud shall pass away,
That darkens, love, 'twixt you and me."

Ah! why had Jacques chosen that song of all others, and at a time when he, perforce, must listen? "Every

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cloud shall pass away!" Would it, indeed, ever be so. See, the clouds had passed away from before the moon, and now every feature of camp and plain, and far-off mountain range could be clearly seen.

Was it an omen for good, a sign that some day all should be cleared up, or would to-morrow end it all? Long after the sound of his comrade's voice had died away, thoughts such as these stirred him with a great unrest, until at last there stole into his mind words which he had of en heard and uttere in the old days: "Put thou thy trust in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." Strange the unbidden association of the two diverse thoughts—the one a question, the other a promise! "He shall bring it to pass." Was it true? or was it the empty echo of a dead faith? Anyhow the words had a helpful ring about them; and when his relief came, and he was free to lie down, he was able to calmly think over the past, the very remembrance of which had been so long jealously banished from his mind.

It had all been so sadly simple that it seemed almost impossible that so slight a cause should have such bitter fruit. The story will not take long in telling. James Thorne, now known to his comrades as Private Norton, was the rising young doctor of the small West Riding town of Calderbank. With excellent professional prospects, and secure in the affections of Clare Aston, the Vicar's daughter, he had seemed a fitting subject for the envy of those less happily placed.

One night, however, a runaway horse dashed madly down the main street of the town. Right in the horse's track and inevitably doomed unless speedy help was near, a small child trotted unconcernedly across the road. There was, however, time for an energetic and quick man to save the little one from its peril, and, as it happened, there was standing in the door of Thorne's surgery, not five yards away, a young man of his own size and build.

No sooner did he catch a glimpse of the rushing horse than, overcome by a sudden impulse of terror, he turned and fled into the house, leaving the bewildered and helpless little victim to be picked up presently, crushed and lifeless. Several people had seen the whole occurrence, and knew that he, and he alone, being the nearest, could have saved the child, and from that moment Calderbank held no place for James Thorne. The indignation and scorn of the public he would perhaps have faced; but when there came a stinging little note from Clare, freeing him from his promise on the ground that she could not marry a coward, it was too much for him, and, without seeing her again, he disappeared suddenly from the life and, for the most part, from the thoughts of the good people of Calderbank, who took this action on his part as sure evidence of his guilt, and as supplying the only redeeming point in his character, by showing that he had the grace to be ashamed.

And yet they had all been so completely mistaken, for the figure at the surgery door was not that of James Thorne, but that of Francis Aston, her brother; and it was to shield him, and also because his sweetheart had so readily believed evil of him, that James Thorne had taken up his burden and gone forth into the world, and that now, as Private John Norton, of the Light Horse, he was on the morrow to face the enemy.

Was he right to spoil his life in this way?

Well, he had done it for the best, and so Private John Norton fell asleep, to awake to the stirring sounds of the bugle proclaiming that the dawn had come, and with it the time for action.

* * * * *

At last the long fight was at an end. Many times during the day the issue had seemed to be very doubtful as again and again the fanatical hordes dashed themselves in apparently countless numbers on the small British square. At length pluck, endurance, and discipline had won the day, and far on into the evening the Light Horse pursued the routed and scattered foe, returning at last wearied and worn out to their well-earned rest.

Returned! Yes, such as were left of them, for the victory was not gained but at the cost of a very heavy death-roll. Somewhere out in the scrubby grass Sergeant Jacques was lying dead, and Private Norton was lying wounded almost unto death. Three days afterwards, when the papers in England were full of the "glorious victory," a fair young girl, under the minster shadow in the northern city, was breaking her heart because among the list of the dead she saw the name of Sergeant Jacques, while at Calderbank, Clare Aston read with indifference that Private Norton, who was dangerously wounded, was recommended for the Victoria Cross for distinguished bravery in rescuing a wounded comrade.

Could she only have known that this Private Norton was none other than the one for whom she had been seeking vainly for months past, how her indifference would have vanished. Could he, fuming and fretting in the hospital tent, but have known that in the two months' old *Times* which the man in the next bed was reading, there was an advertisement beseeching a certain "J.T." to come back and forgive, and signed "Clare," what a valuable assistant that short sentence would have been to the overworked surgeon who looked after him. For, unknown to him, that which he had longed for had been brought to pass, and all Calderbank was waiting to do honour to the man who had sacrificed himself for another's sake.

Francis Aston had disappeared from home soon after Thorne, and the week after there appeared in the *Calderbank Herald* a letter signed by him entirely freeing his friend and making full confession of his cowardice.

But Clare Aston did not know who Private Norton was, and Private Norton did not see the *Times*, but lay in his bed in a very irritable state of mind, knowing full well that he would never be any more good to the Light Horse or to any other regiment, but fully persuaded never again to set foot in England. He had almost forgotten his thoughts of the night before the battle, and the old promise had passed from his memory—so had ceased to be a comfort.

And so for a month or more this state of affairs continued, until one morning there marched into a hospital a gentleman who was entirely unknown to our friend, but who walked up to his bedside with a cheery smile, and with the greeting, "Well, Mr. Thorne, I am delighted to see you at last." It only remains for us to say that this stranger was the celebrated inquiry agent, Mr Kenwit, who, after much patient tracing, had succeeded in finding in Private Norton the long-lost James Thorne.

Need we say more than that Mr. Kenwit's employer was a certain Mr. Aston? But readers will easily guess the rest—how a rapid recovery was made; how to one passenger at least on board the homeward-bound steamer *Trojan*, the daily progress seemed absurdly slow; how it was not long before all Calderbank gathered one morning at the parish church to witness such a wedding as had never before been seen there?

Hester Lawrence.

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By E. MILLS.

V.—When Rosemary Grew.

"Crying! Why, Rosemary, what on earth has happened?"

The young man who made this startled exclamation placed his gun carefully against a tree, and then sprang across the narrow ravine that separated him from the tumbled heap of faded print and tangled chestnut hair which was all that could be seen of Miss Rosemary Rae.

He knelt down awkwardly beside her, and put one of his sun-browned, work-coarsened hands on her shoulder.

"What are you crying for?" he said again.

She jumped up and threw back her mane of hair from her flushed, tear-stained face.

"I'm crying because I'm pretty," she answered defiantly.

"But girls like to be pretty. I can't fancy folk crying about a thing like that."

"Oh, no! you never would," said Miss Rae, with conviction. Though her meaning was not quite certain, his evident want of good looks was. His naturally fair-skinned face was burnt to a fiery crimson, and his side whiskers were sandy, and his hair but a shade darker; it was a good, honest face, and that was all one could say for it. To make up for it a little, his figure was good, in a sturdy, well-knit style, and he looked at his best in his present costume, of blue shirt, moleskins, and gaiters.

"Still," continued the girl, "you won't feel happy in a moment, when I tell you all. I'm going away to-morrow for good, and all because I am *pretty*."

The scorn with which she accented this last word was indescribable.

"Going away, Rosemary?" The dismay of his voice was indescribable also.

"Yes, someone—a passing drover, I think—told someone else, who told Aunt Anne Leigh that her sister (that's mother, you know) had pretty daughters, and Aunt Anne wrote last week, and said that one of us must come to her in Sydney for two years, and share every advantage of education, and all that, with her daughter; only mother must send the prettiest she has, and so I have to go," and Rosemary began to sob again.

Harry Smith reviewed rapidly in his mind the faces and forms of Rosemary's many sisters. They were all nice-looking—but no, there was no doubt at all, the eldest Miss Rae was the pick of the basket. Even the tear-stains, the untidy hair, the skimpy, badly-cut frock, the clumsy boots, could not alter the fact that she was a really pretty girl.

"Clover isn't too bad," he said at length, but in the tone of one who catches at straws.

"I begged mother to send her—but there's no doubt her hair is red. No, they all say I must go—oh! oh! oh! I shall have to let Cousin Mabel's maid do my hair and squeeze in my waist, and even lace up my boots; it's too bad. Oh, Harry, couldn't you marry me now and save me from this?"

The young man shook his head.

"Wool is so low this year, and your dad would never hear of it until you are older."

Rosemary's face fell.

"I'm only seventeen," she said, "and I know by my frocks I'm growing still. Dad says I'm not to dream of marrying until I have finished growing, so I suppose that's impossible."

"Like enough you will forget all about me amongst all your grand friends," said Harry jealously.

Rosemary regarded him with serene scorn. "I don't break my promises," she said sternly. "I mean to live and die in the bush; and when I have finished growing you can come for me, and I will leave the horrid town and stuck-up town people—gladly—just you see if I don't."

"You will find the selection a bit lonely at first," suggested Smith, anxiously.

"Oh, no; it is so close to Emu Flat—one of the girls can always ride over to see me. But don't you forget to come and rescue me, now, will you?"

"I love you, Rosemary," was all the answer he made; but it satisfied Miss Rae; as, indeed, it well might, for the light blue eyes of this undemonstrative young bushman said more than his words could do. He was a man, full-grown in body and mind, and Rosemary, only a child with a woman's form—a fact which the former did not realise then—and so he felt almost happy as they

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walked along the sandy road which led to the ramshackle old station house, which lay in the shadow of the ranges, and she tered the happy-go-lucky, poverty-ruled household of the Raes.

There were a tribe of little children, and three big, loutish, handsome boys, and two girls named Clover and Myrtle.

The only luxury hard-worked Mrs. Rae allowed herself was the reading of the *Sabbath Herald*, and from its heroines she chose her daughter's names.

Jack Rae had never been a successful or lucky man, and Mrs. Leigh's offer seemed too good to refuse. Still, they were all more solemn than usual when they assembled in the big, dark dining-room on this, the last evening, when they should all be together for two long years.

The young children eyed Rosemary somewhat as if she were a criminal under sentence of death, and her mother's thin, work-worn face looked sadder and more depressed than usual. She had known luxury and soft living in her long-past youth, and was not anxious to see her eldest daughter follow in her footsteps, to the extent of marrying in her teens, and taking up the hard life of a struggling selector's wife.

"No!" he answered, "I won't forget."

Smith stayed to tea with them, and felt as if the salt beef and fried potatoes would choke him. He could not take his eyes off Rosemary, who looked pretty as a picture, in spite of the lace monstrosity and tarnished locket and chain she had added to her print frock, in the way of evening decoration. Mrs. Rae saw the "collarette" and shook her head, and then glanced at the girl's toil-coarsened hands, and noted how she swung her arms when she walked.

"Annie will have her work cut out, I'm afraid," she murmured; "there's a lot to alter. I never had the time to attend to anyone but the babies!"

After tea Smith smoked in silence with Mr. Rae on the veranda—there was nothing fresh to talk about in this monotonous western life—and then, when Rosemary came in from the kitchen, he went out to get his horse. The girl walked as far as the slip-rails with him, and cried a little when he kissed her good-bye.

As for Harry, his was the grief too deep for expression.

"You will come for me when I have finished growing—you won't forget?" she cried as he swung into his saddle.

"No!" he answered, "I won't forget."

* * * * *

Mabel Leigh told her mother that you could have knocked her down with a feather when she went to meet Rosemary at Circular Quay. "Such an apparition—can you imagine it? She had a coat and skirt on made of black muslin—yes, actually black muslin—and a pink silk affair she called a 'front,' and the skirt had a flounce and a light train! and she had a silver locketland chain round her neck, and a black velvet toque, with a red parrot's wing in it! She had, really. She was standing beside a yellow shoe-trunk, and no end of parcels and bundles. You should just have seen Holmes's face when I told him to take Miss Rae's luggage."

Mrs. Leigh had just returned from a trip to the Blue Mountains, and so missed the arrival of her Queensland niece. She listened to Mabel's narrative with deep sympathy.

"And, of course," continued Miss Leigh, "the wharf was just crowded with all the smartest people. The Stainers had a steam launch party on, and Harold Stainer was talking to me."

"'Who on earth is that queer little fish?' he said. 'But, by Jove, she's pretty' and then I knew it must be Rosemary, and, sure enough, it was."

"Then she is pretty?" said her mother eagerly.

"Yes! she will satisfy even you," answered Mabel, who was not a beauty herself, but owned a certain dash and style that gained her a good deal of attention. She was a nice girl, and did her best to put poor Rosemary at her ease. Everything in the big, luxurious house, on the South Head Road, was strange to the shy bush girl, and she hated everything and everyinmate in it loyally for the first week. Mabel convinced her tactfully that she was tired, and kept her rather shut up until the dressmaker had finished her work, and then it was that Rosemary began to take more interest in her surroundings. There was a big pier-glass in Mabel's room, and Rosemary beheld herself in it beautifully and stylishly dressed for the first time in her life. Her cheeks flushed with delight as she tried on one frock after another.

"Why, Mabel, I look almost as nice as you do," she said, admiringly gazing from the reflection in the glass to her cousin's slight figure, in its smartly-cut tweed frock.

Mabel smiled a little sadly. She was a plain woman in spite of all the arts that aided her, and she knew it. "How the men will spoil her!" she thought. Aloud she said, "I really believe you look a shade 'nicer' than I do, even. Try on this white linen, Rosemary, and then we must hurry down to lunch."

Rosemary's mornings after this were busy with

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masters; she learnt quickly, if superficially, and added dancing and singing to her accomplishments, which hitherfore had consisted of the arts of cracking a stock-whip, swimming and riding well.

In the afternoon Mrs. Leigh whirled her off to garden-parties and At Homes, and Rosemary got through them fairly well, being quick to observe and imitate. Certainly, at her first afternoon tea she, being hungry, made a substantial meal of thin, rolled bread and butter, and lovely, mysterious cakes, but she quickly learnt to toy with one tiny roll in her well-gloved fingers, and to refuse to take more than one cup of tea.

Life was full of joy for Rosemary in those days, and the beauty over which she had wept was the golden key that unlocked the halls of pleasure. "Everyone is so nice to me," she wrote in her home letter, "and town men are really not so bad. They are awfully polite, and one soon gets use to their white hands."

She took to the luxury as a fish to water, and afforded much amusement to Miss Leigh, who watched the process of the evolution of the butterfly indulgently. All the more did it amuse her because in one thing Rosemary remained obdurate: she was going to marry a certain "Mr. Smith," and to live in a two-roomed cottage on a selection, because she had "promised."

Mrs. Leigh was amused also, but she became slightly alarmed when the rich English cricketer laid his heart and fortune at Rosemary's feet and was promptly refused.

Then Mr. Leigh's middle-aged but vastly eligible partner followed in the cricketer's footsteps and shared the self-same fate; and Rosemary's aunt became seriously vexed. "This cannot go on," she said one evening to her daughter. "There's young Harold Stainer evidently deeply smitten, and of all the young men I know I would rather see him the husband of any girl I cared about. There was a time when I thought you rather liked him, Mabel, and that he was interested in you; but this time the affair is quite apparent. And yet, if he proposes, Rosemary will talk of Mr. Smith and the selection. What am I to do?"

"In this case," answered Miss Leigh quietly, "perhaps you are right to give fate a helping hand. Rosemary is quite unfitted for life in the bush as a poor man's wife—now that she has taken so kindly to the fleshpots of Egypt. If you want my advice, mater, it is this. Tell Mr. Stainer to play a waiting game—he is clever enough to do that, and send for Mr. Smith. I think he can be calculated upon to 'cook his own goose,' to put it vulgarly, if plainly."

And so Mrs. Leigh wrote two letters—one to Mrs. Rae, inclosing another to Mr. Smith. The latter was a marvel in its way. It contained an invitation—among other things—and as Harry had done well with his wool this year, and was longing with all the strength of his big honest heart to see the sweet face of Rosemary Rae again, he decided to run down to Sydney, and have a look round, making the Leighs' house headquarters, as Mrs. Leigh so kindly suggested. Visions of "long days" sailing in the harbour with Rosemary, climbing the post-office tower with Rosemary, sitting in the wonderful gardens with Rosemary, flitted through his brain—and he saw all the world through rose-coloured glasses. With care he could build a little house when he came back, and at the end of the year the place would be ready for her. He was busy breaking-in one of his best horses for her, up to the day he left. He bought a new pair of boots, a round black felt hat, and a new black cloth ready-made suit, at the store in the township, and with his valise, and a parcel tied in a red cotton handkerchief, he started on the journey which was to end with so much joy—and Rosemary.

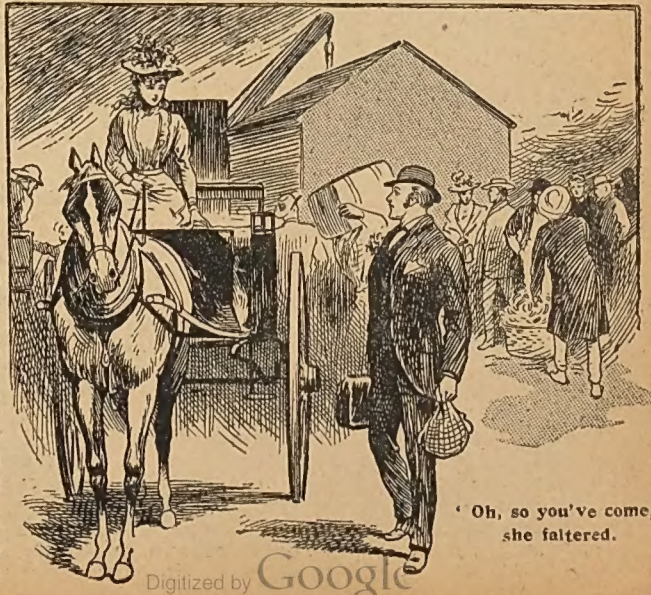
Meanwhile Rosemary was finding Harold Stainer a very pleasant companion. He was always ready to do her bidding, to bring her the latest news or the newest books, and, above all, he danced divinely, and Rosemary had all the passion of lately aroused love for dancing—there seemed nothing on earth so delightful to her as a waltz, with perfect music and a perfect partner.

Then, again, he never worried her about marriage, and seemed to quite understand why she must stick to Mr. Smith. He was not a handsome man—one of Nature's laws (though with many exceptions) seems to be that plain men adore pretty women, and *vice versâ*—and none of Rosemary's lovers had been Adonises; but the young barrister's clever, sharp-featured face, with its restless, deep-set eyes, was of quite a different style of ugliness from Harry's homely, sun-crimsoned countenance. He has a certain air of distinction which would have made him noticeable anywhere, and Rosemary was rather proud of her friend.

She drove the little tax-cart down to the wharf herself to meet Harry Smith, and scanned the faces of the incoming passengers narrowly. She was dressed in a light linen frock, and had white shoes, gloves, and a white parasol, and a hat that seemed like a miniature garden of blue cornflowers, and she looked as fresh and lovely as the flower of spring herself.

Now, as Smith left the gangway he became aware of an Indian hawker selling bananas for the absurd price of fourteen for sixpence. He was immensely struck with the cheapness of the fruit, which was sold for half-a-crown a dozen in the bush township, and which was there regarded as a great luxury, even after its long journey in the boot of the coach.

"By Jove! what a chance; I must take some to Rosemary," he thought, and he promptly bought a shilling's worth, and tied his handkerchief round the dubious brown paper bags—to facilitate their carriage.



"Oh, so you've come," she faltered.

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Rosemary saw a rough-looking young man in an ill-fitting black suit, and with low-crowned felt hat on his head, buying bananas, but she hardly "took him in" until he turned and saw her, and then the glorified face was so noticeable that she recognised him. Yes, this dreadful-looking young man was Harry Smith, side whiskers, sun-burnt, and all.

"Oh, so you've come," she faltered.

"Come, I should think I have. Did you think I wouldn't keep my promise. Yes, Rosemary, you have grown."

"Two inches," said the girl. "I was measured yesterday; jump in, Harry. Is that all your luggage? Oh! well, it can go in here, too, and now tell me all about the people at home," she rattled on nervously, and tried not to think, as she skilfully threaded her way through the narrow, winding streets.

"He will look quite different to-morrow when he has been to a decent tailor," she thought, quite forgetting that men are never so adaptable or so imitative as women, and that he was perfectly satisfied with his new store suit and shiny felt hat.

Rosemary passed several girls and men whom she knew in George Street, and one and all looked astonished, and she felt that her cheeks were almost as crimson as her companion's whole face. When she drew up at the hall door and the stately Holmes came out to assist with the luggage, there was nothing for him to carry but the bananas, as Harry stuck to the valise; and matters were not improved by the bags bursting, and the portly Holmes being obliged to go down on his hands and knees and pick up the fruit.

At lunch Mrs. Leigh and Mabel tried tactfully to cover his mistakes, but they were many, although he erred chiefly on the side of over-politeness, passing things so quickly to the three women that Holmes was obliged to stand in offended idleness. And Rosemary saw it all and was as yet too young to understand how very little it really mattered.

After tea Harold Stainer appeared—well-groomed, as usual, from the top of his sleek black head to the tips of his patent-leather shoes—and his advent had a paralysing effect on Harry, who longed to be outside smoking, and away from all this strange conventional society. Harold seemed to take it for granted that Miss Rae would be engaged with her friend, and he took a new song to the piano, and asked Mabel to try it for him. She sat down with a strange, half-mocking smile on her face. There was a look of self-pity under it all—such as a person might look who was obliged to sharpen the sword destined for his own destruction.

"Perhaps you would like to show Mr. Smith the famous harbour view, Rosemary," she said.

Rosemary was looking her best that night, with the colour flaming in her cheeks, and her lovely neck and shoulders rising from the filmy lace of her evening dress.

Smith watched her closely as she parted the crimson curtain, and led the way to the verandah, and his thoughts went back to the parting by the slip-rails, and the slender figure in the skimpy, faded print frock, whose shortness made her look so young and childish. There was no doubt of it, Rosemary had grown.

They sat down on the verandah chairs and looked at the dancing lights in the harbour, and listened to the subdued roar of the city.

Stainer was singing in a sweet baritone, trying over the new song, and Rosemary felt vexed to think how contented he was without her—and at last Harry spoke:

"Well, my girl," he said, "will you be ready to come back with me? We're all homesick for our little Rosemary."

"When are you going?" faltered the girl.

"On the 22nd."

"Oh! impossible; the first Government-house ball is on the 30th. I could not go before that."

"There will be no dances on the selection, Rosie. I'm afraid you will find it dull."

Rosemary sighed. "Oh no! not at all," she said politely.

"I'd be dead in a week if I had to live in a city," he continued. "Anyway I've added a bit to the cottage, and my clip sold well this year. I calculated we could marry in October. Will you make me the happiest chap in the world, sweetheart?" and he took one of her white hands gently in his own.

"Don't cry," he said, "I'm not going to make you keep it."

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A sudden memory of the old life, the monotony, the roughness, the hard work, swept over her, and she could hardly frame her low-toned answer.

"I—I suppose I promised," she said faintly, "and I always keep my promises," and then she began to cry.

He jumped up and stood before her. "Don't cry," he said, "I'm not going to make you keep it. You've grown, Rosemary, in more ways than one—grown out of the old life and me, for one thing."

"It's true," sobbed Rosemary. "I don't love you enough to give up all this for you, but I thought I did. Believe me, I thought I did, or I should never have let aunt send for you. Oh! you must stay a long time, and have a really jolly visit. I will do all I can to make you enjoy yourself."

"Stay and see that cursed lawyer hanging round you!" interrupted the bushman, with sudden heat.

Then his voice softened again.

"Not but what he's more fitted for you than I am. No: I'm going now at once. You can send my things to the Metropole to-morrow. I'm going because I love you in a way you can't understand. I'm not even going to kiss you, lest I couldn't leave you, and would make you keep your promise."

Rosemary sprang to her feet with a sudden rush of remorseful feeling, and held out her hands appealingly. But Harry knew that this was the pity that is not akin to love, and he flung her hands almost roughly from him; and in a few minutes was walking quickly down the gravel sweep, battling with the greatest sorrow of his life.

There is little more to tell.

Mrs. Leigh was a successful diplomat, and Rosemary fulfilled her destiny and married the barrister, and became one of Sydney's gayest and loveliest society matrons.

And no doubt, as time went on, Harry would fulfil his, and marry some good, homely girl, who would keep his house and many children in perfect order; but I doubt if he would ever quite forget the dream that was to have been fulfilled when Rosemary grew.

NUTSHELL STORIES.

The story of a man who had a nose so large that he could not blow it without the use of gunpowder has turned out to be a hoax.

Gentleman (to itinerant vendor of plants, "I say, those plants you sold me the other have no roots to them."

Vendor: "Well, guv'nor, I've got the roots if you like to buy 'em. I charge hextra for roots."

A little girl four years old, walking in the country, and seeing a lot of black cows and a few white ones in a field grazing, remarked:

"Papa, do those white cows give milk and the black ones tea?"

"Witness, I believe you said you were an innkeeper?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?"

"Well, that depends. When 'e 'as the money about 'im I do, but when 'e wants to put it on the slate I don't."

Mr. Ward gives some amusing specimens of the shrewdness and humour of some savages. For example, one of them brought him a fish which was abominably stale.

"White men," said Mr. Ward to the native, "don't eat fish that smell like that."

"But," answered the native, "you don't eat the smell."

Lady: "Here, my poor man, is a ticket for a dinner at a soup-kitchen; and you can eat as much there as will suffice for to-morrow and the day after."

Mendicant: "Thank ye kindly, mum; but I'd rather like first to eat enough for yesterday and the day before. If it would make no difference to you, write that down on the ticket."

The recent formation of a Domestic Servants' Union in Australia has already begun to bear fruit in the shape of "soft-sawdering," deferential advertisements of mistresses in the newspapers. Here is a lovely one that appeared in a Melbourne journal the other day: "Girl, useful, tidy, wanted by married couple; no children, comfortable home, very easy place, side gate, etc."

When a man finds a button in his salad he will hardly take the excuse that it is part of the dressing.

A man never gets married so many times that he will not hold his breath at the part of the ceremony where those who have objections are invited to come forward.

Facetious Old Gent (showing a false set of teeth to his granddaughter): "There, my dear! I told you when next you honoured me with a call I'd show you my new set of dining-room furniture."

Farmer (with gun, who has just put up a sign: "To Trespaissers—prepair for eternity"): "I like the idea, somehow or other. It has a religious feelin' runnin' through it, and at the same time means business."

Irish Porter (calling out the name of station): "Patrickswell!"

Tommy Atkins (from a third-class compartment window): "Glad to 'ear it. We 'ope Biddy's in good 'ealth, too."

Tangle: "Hang it all, Maria; that confounded poodle of yours has bitten a piece clean out of my leg."

Mrs. Tangle: "Oh, how very annoying, Henry, when poor Fido is ill, and the doctor said that he mustn't have a bit of meat for at least two weeks."

Tomdik: "You didn't put in an appearance at the club last night!"

M'Clammy: "No; I was regulating the earth!"

Tomdik: "What do you mean?"

M'Clammy: "You have heard that, according to *Home Notes*, 'the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world?'"

"The contribution-box will now be passed for the heathen," announced the minister.

"Why, pa, you put a bad half-crown on the plate," whispered Miss Bagley.

"That's all right," replied the father. "You don't suppose a cannibal knows the difference between that and a good half-crown, do you?"

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How the Lost Confidence was Restored.

On board the *Australasia*, bound for London from Melbourne. Off Cape Horn. Night very foggy, and wind blowing hard.

Miss Florence Fortescue's *cabin*. Miss F. *in her berth; very pretty and young, thoroughbred features, soft brown Irish eyes, dark hair, pale and very delicate-looking after severe illness; listening with a rather wistful expression on her face. Enter* Dr. Woods *(ship's doctor) tall, broad-shouldered, good-looking, florid complexion, blue eyes, large light moustache, and fair hair; an expression of strong suppressed excitement and anxiety, but trying hard to look natural and unembarrassed.*

Miss Fortescue.—Well, Mr. Doctor! I thought you had quite forgotten your patient this evening. Do you happen to know what time it is?

Dr. Woods.—Yes; it is nearly eleven. You must forgive me for being so late. I have had a very busy evening, and there has been such a row going on overhead. I knew it was no good to give you your sleeping draught.

Miss F.—No, indeed; what *have* they been doing? I really began to wonder if there was anything the matter; but I was sure you would come and tell me if there was much wrong.

Dr. W.—I can hardly tell you anything yet; for the fog only lifted a short time ago. That was one thing that kept me so late. I wanted to bring you the news; but the Captain is not to be spoken to at this moment. And how are you feeling to-night—a little stronger?

Miss F.—Ever so much. I mean to go on deck to-morrow whether you give me leave or not. *(Renewed noise and bustle on deck: a sharp look of trouble crosses the Doctor's face.)*

Miss F. (continues).—Oh! Don't look so awfully anxious Doctor. Of course I don't mean it. You know how good I am about obeying your orders; but I *am* sick of this wretched little cabin, and I am really nearly well now—thanks to your good care, I know. But I do so long to go on deck.

Dr. W.—Well, Miss Florence, you've lost nothing by not going up for the last ten days; neither sun, moon, nor stars have been visible, nothing but fog day and night, and bitter cold. But if the sun shows to-morrow I promise to take you up for a short time. Do you think you could walk up and down for a little, now that you are stronger?

Miss F.—Of course; why, one would think I had been at death's door to hear you, Doctor! Every mile we get nearer England will make me better now, you'll see.

Dr. W.—Are you so *very* eager to be at the end of your voyage, then?

Miss F.—What an odd person you are! A minute ago you seemed to remember how ill I had been; now you wonder that I should long to be on shore and well again. It's not so very astonishing, is it? But what ails you to-night, Doctor; what are you so preoccupied about?

Dr. W.—Really nothing at all, I assure you. I was only wondering if I had given a rash promise about taking you on deck. You have a warm fur cloak, I think, haven't you? Where do you manage to stow it in this little cabin?

Miss F.—Well, you certainly are dreaming. Why, look—you are leaning against it at this moment; it's hanging up behind you on the door.

Dr W (turning round and quietly taking a fur cloak off the door).—It *is* a nice warm one, and must cover you from head to foot, it's so long; and have you a fur cap to wear with it?

Miss F.—Yes, naturally; but, Doctor, don't you think it is a little late to be examining my wardrobe to-night? I don't want to be rude; but isn't it time for such a very delicate person as you seem to think me to go to sleep?

Dr. W.—High time; but do you really think I should be fooling over what you are to wear to-morrow if there was any chance of your getting to sleep? Miss Florence *(quickly)* you have not taken your sleeping draught yourself, of course?

Miss F.—Not exactly. Listen to that! Much use in your sleeping medicines while they are making that noise over my head.

Dr. W.—You admit I am not keeping you awake, then; and you know you were reading when I came in, weren't you? I shall have to stop your light after hours if you wear out your eyes in this way. What is your book?

Miss F.—Oh, a book you have read ages ago, I dare say—*Jane Eyre*—but it's the first time I ever had the chance, and do you know, I was so horribly frightened at that mad woman, I nearly jumped out of my berth when you knocked at the door just now. I was so glad you did not feel my pulse when you first came in. I did not mean to confess what a little goose I had been; but I was really frightened.

Dr. W.—Are you very easily frightened? Do you faint when you are?

Miss F.—Faint! *never! (with disdain).* I told you before I was no coward. I am not a bit afraid when there's anything *real* to frighten one; it's only horrors in books and ghost stories over the fire at night, and such things, that make me shake.

Dr. W.—Suppose we were ever in danger on this voyage, would you do what I told you quietly and without hesitation?

Miss F.—I should be quiet, I know, and—"do what you told me"? Yes *(saucily)*, Mister Doctor, I believe I should at once; but why? Is there any chance of our being in danger? Somehow, one never thinks of that in a big ship like this.

Dr. W.—Oh, no, no; there never is, never. I only asked to see what you would say; it was very silly of me.

Miss F.—Don't be alarmed. I assure you I am as cool as a cucumber—indeed cooler, for it's anything but warm to-night. But why did you ask me that?

Dr. W.—May I tell you one reason why I asked you? No, don't answer me; I will, I *must*, tell you now. I know it's not the place, the time; but, good Heavens! you don't know, you will forgive me afterwards, but you must see, you must know how I love and worship you. From the first moment——

Miss F. (putting out her hand as if to prevent him).—Oh, stop, stop!

Dr. W.—No, I won't, I cannot. When you came on board that first day, and your father brought me up to you and said, 'Doctor, I put her into your charge; you will take care of my daughter,' and you looked up at me with your eyes swimming in tears—I knew then, that very moment, that I was done for, that nothing in life would

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ever matter much to me again unless I could have you to take care of always—always, my darling!—unless——

Miss F.—Oh, you *must* stop; you have spoilt everything. I thought you *knew*, and that it was all just goodness that made you so kind to me.

Dr. W.—Knew what? what is there to know? you can't, you are too young to be—to care for anyone else yet. Tell me it s not that!

Miss F. (*rather haughtily*).—I don't know what you mean by too young. I shall be eighteen my next birthday, and I was engaged a whole year ago. What do you suppose I am leaving my own people in Australia for now? You must have known.

Dr. W.—No, indeed; I swear I never guessed a word of it. Your father told me you had not been well, that the climate did not suit you, that you were going back to England.

Miss F.—As if I should leave him for anything but —*that!*

Dr. W.—I thought it was only for a time, for the sea voyage—oh! I don't know what I thought—I only know I am the blindest idiot to have hoped, and a madman to have spoken to you to-night. And now I have only made you hate me—and yet—(*sudden quiet on deck. A look of intense relief on the Doctor's face*).

Miss F.—Now you are talking nonsense—hate you, who have almost saved my life by your care and nursing! No; I am not quite such an ungrateful wretch—but it has spoilt things to me, and somehow I can't feel as if you had been quite so unselfish and good, now that I know you were caring for me. But why do you look so different all of a sudden? You look almost glad now. I can't make you out, Dr. Woods: you are not one bit like yourself. Do forget all this nonsense; let us pretend you knew all along, and let things be as they were before this horrid night. Will you not? and leave me now—it is quiet at last overhead. Good night! Promise me you will never talk of this again during the rest of the voyage—never once?

Dr. W.—I must once more—to-morrow, Miss Florence, in justice to myself, and perhaps to get back a little of your good will. To-morrow—but do not fear, I shall never bore you again after that. May I give you your bromide before I go? You see I am only 'the Doctor' again already.

Miss F.—Thanks! (*takes the medicine and puts out her hand rather coldly*). Good-night, Dr. Woods.

Next morning, on deck. Miss F., *in the fur cloak, coming up the companion, leaning on the Doctor's arm and looking very frail in the full daylight. Both seem embarrassed and awkward.*

Miss F.—At last! It feels like getting out of prison —three mortal weeks have I been in that wretched cabin, and there was one moment when I was pretty sure you would have to throw me to the fishes. Bah! that's over, at all events. You did take good care of me, Dr. Woods—I am not ungrateful for that.

(*They walk up and down the deck slowly*).

Dr. W.—For Heaven's sake, don't talk to me in that formal way, and don't be afraid of giving me a chance to get in a word. I only want to say enough to give you back the confidence I know you had in me. You may think me an old fogey, and I must confess to being three-and-thirty—a long way ahead of seventeen, it's true.

Miss F. (*pouting slightly*).—Nearly eighteen, I said.

Dr. W.—Well, eighteen if you like—you know you think me quite middle-aged, anyhow; and indeed, I begin to feel so to-day, now that I know—what you told me last night. But you may be sure I shall never torment or worry you again. Only trust me—give me back my right to scold you when you are imprudent—yes, you are often, about your health—tease and chaff me as you used to. And believe me—you do believe me? —that I had not the very faintest notion you were engaged to be married, or I should never——

Miss F.—I do believe that; and I don't suppose anyone dislikes being cared for. It is not that; but it all feels different now, and you must have thought me—well, I don't know how to say it, but it was just because I thought you knew that I felt so much at my ease with you, and talked to you and trusted you—and now you seem like someone else that I don't know yet and am not so sure of. But I daresay it will all come right again, only—(*stopping*).

Dr. W.—Only what? There is something on your mind, Miss Florence. Tell me candidly what it is. We can never be quite friends again while you hide anything from me. Scold me as much as you like; only, get it all out now, and let us start fair once more.

Miss F.—There *is* something I don't quite understand. Though it may seem a little thing, it is so unlike you that it puzzles me. Tell me honestly, why did you disturb me so late and begin all this at that time of night, and while I am still weak and ill? Do you think it was quite fair and considerate under the circumstances?

Dr. W.—Heavens! I never thought it would look like that. When I came to your cabin last night I was terribly excited and anxious, but I never for one moment intended to speak about myself; the impulse to tell you what I had long felt came upon me quite suddenly—I had begun before I knew what I was doing. But I swear to you I did not come then for any selfish reason; I——

Miss F.—Dr. Woods, it is you who are not being candid now. If this was so, why on earth should you have come at eleven o'clock—you never came after nine till last night? I wish you had not, but I could forgive it better if you acknowledge that it was wrong of you.

Dr. W. (*beginning in an offended tone, which gradually becomes passionate and excited*).—You are very hard upon me, Miss Florence, and I think this is the first time anyone has ever doubted my word. But since you force me to speak, I will tell you myself what you are sure to hear from the Captain and others in a few minutes. It is true that the fog lifted suddenly last night, and when it did they found that the ship was in the utmost peril. We had lost our bearings and were driving towards land; the breakers were close ahead; the wind setting strong ashore. There was not a moment to be lost—if she did not go about we must be on the rocks. Once, twice, she missed stays; the suspense was maddening. I could stand it no longer. I knew if she missed once more she must strike. I knew what a small chance you would have in your weakness when the rush to the boats came; and I determined, come what would, to save your life if that were possible. Then, when I saw your face, and thought that the next minute it might be all up with us—oh! how could I hold my tongue, how could I help yearning for one word of tenderness from you? This is why I came, why I spoke so madly, why I——

Miss F. (*with streaming eyes and holding out both hands to him*)—O Doctor! can you ever forgive me? Now I understand.

JAMES PHILIPS.

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THE news came to Howland Starforth by letter and newspapers, that John Maze, the millionaire, had died and left two hundred thousand pounds to him by his will.

People talked it over and believed the will couldn't be upset, though contested by rich relatives who were sorry to see so much money go out of the family, and said Maze was mad.

Starforth was surrounded by congratulators, however, on the very morning when the news came. He was down among the dregs in the very lowest sedimental depths of poverty. He had lain abed in his last remaining shirt till eleven o'clock, because he could not afford a breakfast, and when he had fastened his rags about him with some borrowed pins, he had gone into a grocer's shop to negotiate credit for bread and cheese enough to keep him going for that day. And there he received three letters, seven newspapers were thrust under his nose, and eleven men crowded eagerly about him, and all coincided in the astounding tidings—in fact, they jostled him so that he had to retreat behind a hogshead of sugar, for fear the rags would get unpinned.

"Gentlemen," said Howland, "don't crowd. To be sure, I've been a poor man for twenty years, and am used to being crowded; but you forget that I am now a rich man; and the feelings of my clothes, if not me, are tender, and unless you wish me to begin being rich in an unbecoming fashion, I say, don't crowd."

"But we are so glad of your good luck."

"Ah!" said Starforth, with a dry snuff; "let me see; I have suffered poverty for twenty years—disappointments, ill-paid industry—been shabby and shunned—my sympathy for the poor classing me as the companion of wretches—and my only crimes to merit this long distress were my generosity, ill-luck, and lack of business tact. And now, when chance makes me lucky, you are glad. Well, I believe you—and I am glad, too"

All offered to do anything to prove it.

"Then give me," said he, to one who offered credit, "a suit of clothes and a beefsteak, first thing!"

They were furnished directly, and with these he commenced life as a rich man, turning his back on rags and bread and cheese for ever.

Starforth had once lived in the same town with Maze, who had learnt his history, been charmed with his many acts of disinterested benevolence towards wretches even more distressed than he, and in a moment of misanthropy for all the world beside, had determined thus to reward him.

Day after day now letters poured in upon Starforth from lawyers, offering their services to support his claim. Some said it was precarious unless defended; others, that it was sure at any rate, but a timely champion would get it acknowledged sooner; some offered money for his present known need, if they were engaged; others sent it, to make sure; some mentioned terms for the job; others asked what he would give; others made pay contingent on success.

Then came letters by the score from private persons; offers of credit from tradesmen; offers of money from brokers, at a stated rate of interest; offers of partnership from firms, now in need, but which had crushed him when down; reminders of small loans and bills unpaid, hoping he would not forget when in possession; hopes that his good fortune would not make him irreligious or intemperate; petitions for patronage and charity saying, "You were poor once yourself," and a hundred and fifty plans, of speculations, in which he was invited to join and share the immense profits—and so on.

But he noticed one circumstance—that of all who had befriended him in an unselfish manner, though many congratulated and some had grown poor, not one asked assistance—for their pure generosity was sensitive, and recoiled from the idea that they might have expected an equivalent.

The last was from one who had lent him two shillings twenty years before:

"Which," said the writer, "at six per cent., simple interest, would now amount to about double. You may make it compound, if you please—but as it is uncertain whether you will pay at all, I can't spare time now to figure up what it would then be. Time is money."

Starforth was naturally, or through misfortune, eccentric, and he advertised an answer to all—a general one—in the course of which he said to the lawyers:

"I shall employ no advocate, but let fortune take her course. She has had her own way with me so long, that now she smiles I dare not presume to interfere, lest she withdraw them."

"Confound the fellow!" cried the whole legal chorus, "the legatee is as mad as the legator."

The rosy dawn of Howland Starforth's credit had not lasted more than a week, when one day, as he was airing his new suit in a park, he was approached by an elderly man in a suit almost as tattered as that which so lately had cost him so much trouble to pin.

Starforth recognised the person at once. It was James Plummet. He greeted him cordially, and showed him several letters in proof of his prospects. Plummet had once been able to assist him, and had done so most generously, but was now evidently poor. He read the letters and looked greatly pleased; but though he seemed dropping to pieces, he asked for no assistance to defer the period of dissolution.

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Starforth was moved by grateful memory, and more by the man's conduct and appearance.

"I see how it is, Plummet," said he, cheeringly. "You are down now. I don't forget when I was. Here I have letters and have had other offers, from a pack of selfish speculators in chances, who will furnish me with abundant pecuniary and other aid, to be paid for at double price when I get my money, and to be accounted gratuitous if I don't get it. Come with me. I think it is safe to accept, for I shall not feel it in either event."

So he provided Plummet with an ample wardrobe, a sum of money, and, by virtue of his new-born influence, helped him into a lucrative situation, and at parting he gave him a written bond.

"Here," said he, "is something in memory of former kindness. If the condition is fulfilled, it will be a fortune to you, and only a drop in the bucket to me. You cast your bread on the waters; it has returned to bless you on dry land."

This was a promissory note for one thousand pounds, payable when Starforth should get possession of his money.

And now it was that Starforth, with plenty of rich apparel and money advanced on the above-mentioned terms, suffered himself to be taken under the wing of a fashionable popinjay, one Augustus Fitzleech, and put through a course of lionization.

Fitzleech was a toy of a man—an essence bottle, "Not to know him argued yourself unknown" in fashionable eddies—as common as a butterfly, as flimsy, gay, and gaudy. Like other flies, he had the entrée everywhere, and by him Starforth was proudly introduced to the social circles of people of money, fashion, rank, learning, and genius.

He received the welcoming smiles of all, and, as he was a single man, especially of bowing fathers and courtesying mothers who had misses capable of marriage.

It was quite a treat to Starforth who had been a man of sorrow for so long. He felt as hilarious at this new phase of his life as a successful debutant upon the stage, or a mouse which has at last gnawed its way to the right side of a cheese box. But his pride was not excited a whit—it was his mirth, his curiosity. He revelled in the obsequiousness and adulation which he knew how to appraise, and reflected servile civility with a politeness as sincere, or a humility more genuine.

"Pray tell me, dear Mr. Starforth who is your tailor? I must know him. Such an admirable coat—or else it is you who become it is well!"

"Nature, sir, is my regular tailor; but for the past twenty years rags were so abundant that I depended a good deal on art, and had more tails than I could count."

"Don't, for Heaven's sake!" whispered the horrified Fitzleech.

"I favour immensely the exquisite symmetry of your style of boots, Mr. Starforth. Do you get them from Paris yourself, or through a London firm?"

"I really couldn't swear where they came from, but they make me growl at the corns they give me, every time I put them on. You see, sir, my feet have spread all out of shape, owing to a compulsory habit of wearing old cast-off shoes, or going barefoot."

"Are you gone crazy? Please desist!" implored Fitzleech.

"In confidence, friend Starforth, who is your shirt-maker? I frankly admit I affect that style of front very much."

"It is the only front I have had for years which *wasn't* affected, sir, either by age or wear. I was so glad to get this that I forgot to inquire who built the establishment."

His ludicrous replies referring to past poverty, and his graver comments showing utter indifference to whimsical respectability, set his lioniser upon the rack, and Fitzleech gave him up. He departed from the conventional atmosphere with a very unconventional chuckle, leaving behind him the reputation of being either an eccentric genius, or crazed by sudden fortune or long misfortune.

But this summer-time of his expectancy was short, and was not followed even by a compromising autumn, for freezing winter of disappointment set in abruptly.

The will of old Maze had been contested in court, and was upset. It was decided that the testator was mad when he made it, and had left such an enormous sum to Starforth only through a freak of insane benevolence; and so the property all went to one of his relatives.

Howland Starforth received the news with regret, but with an equanimity as complete as when he had heard the good news.

The host of human butterflies all speedily vanished, of course, and he was glad of it; while those who had assisted him on speculation, despite the terms agreed upon, urgently expressed their "hopes that he would work out what they had advanced."

But this to him was no new insight into the world's selfishness. He had often dreamed a pleasant dream before—and woke to hunger and misusage!

With beggars he had often divided his last shilling; by beggars on horseback he had as often been spattered with the mire of contempt.

"World—frothing, glittering, remorseless, treacherous wave, I know you," murmured he, as he took his customary morning saunter through the park, "but I fear you not, for I have learnt how to swim."

He halted and looked heavenward.

"What are you looking at?" said a voice close by.

He diverted his gaze, and saw Plummet.

"I was looking for a situation," said Starforth, with a significant smile; "but I suppose my old ill luck will attend me."

"What! A man worth two hundred thousand pounds, and want to die?"

"All is lost," replied Starforth; "but, thank goodness, I did some good while I had a chance. Next to my money, however, I am sorry you have lost a thousand pounds."

"Not exactly," said Plummet, with an astonishing degree of illumination in his face. "I have to inform you that I was the nearest living relative of Maze, and was your chief rival expectant of the property. When I saw you last, I was not in reality poor, but came to you, so seemingly, resolved to sound you, and if I succeeded to the inheritance, to do precisely as much for you as your gratitude and sympathy did for me. I found you true metal in your hour of fancied prosperity; you shall find me so in the real one. You lost, I won. There is my cheque for one thousand pounds."

"Can this be reality?" exclaimed Starforth, staring at the cheque, which he held with trembling hand.

"It is indeed," answered Plummet; "and to use your own words, 'it will be a fortune to you, and only a drop in the bucket to me.' You cast your bread upon the waters; it has returned to bless you on dry land!"

The cheque was honoured, and the benevolent child of misfortune has enough to last till he dies.

J. Pigstraw.

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THE MINER'S LOVE.

ONE September morning, while the sun was shining down in the Australian mining town of Walong, Ellen and her father came slowly along the road.

Over in Gilt Creek a great strike had occurred, and numbers of prospectors thronged the streets, and stood in groups at every corner. One rough miner turned and looked after Ellen and her father and the old hand-organ.

"This 'ere's a city now, boys!" he cried. "Just look at the organ-grinder come to town."

"Give me a tune, old man!" called out a second miner.

"Let him alone, boys," said a third. "He is blind."

Ellen led her father down the narrow street, and piloted him safely through the noisy crowd. As she turned a corner she spied an unpretending eating-house.

"Dinner 1s. 6d.," the sign read; and she paused before the open door.

"We'll go in and git some dinner, dad. I'm fearful hungry."

She led her father to one of the small tables, and slipped the organ from his back. Then she drew an old red handkerchief from her pocket and untied one corner. A little roll of coins dropped out on to the table.

"Got enough, dear?" asked her father. His quick ear had caught the click of the coins.

"Lots," said she shortly.

She hastily tied up the money, and going to the counter ordered dinner for her father, and for herself—only a bowl of oatmeal and milk.

"I was pretty near starved," said the old organ-grinder, as he ate his roast beef with a good relish. "Hain't the meat good, Ellen?"

"Course it is!" answered Ellen calmly, taking a sip of milk.

"And the tomatoes and the rice puddin'?" added her father.

"Yes, dad; but don't stop to talk," said his daughter.

She soon finished her own simple dinner, and leant back in the stiff wooden chair. Two miners close by looked up admiringly. Her eyes were large and black, as had been those of her Italian mother, who had died when she was born. Heavy braids of black hair were wound round her head, and her cheeks and lips were crimson. Her old straw hat was tied down with a faded ribbon; her dark blue dress was stained and shabby. She wore a blanket shawl round her slender shoulders.

"We've had a splendid dinner, hain't we?" said her father, rising and taking the organ on his back.

The young woman took her father's arm and led him to the corner of the street.

"We'll stop and play here, dad."

Her father patiently began to turn the crank of the old organ. She stood beside him, and eagerly scanned the faces of the passers-by. Few seemed to think the music was worth paying for. A lady gave a coin, and a miner carelessly tossed a sixpence towards them.

But their supper and a night's lodging were to be paid for, and very little was left in the handkerchief.

It grew late at last. The organ-grinder had played through all his tunes.

"You are tired, dad," said Ellen, as her father paused "We'll go and find a place to sleep."

"We don't want no supper, do we, Nell? We had such a hearty dinner.'

"Yes, dad," said she faintly.

"And it was late, too," added the old man. "It must ha' been 'most three o'clock."

"Be you hungry, dad?" asked the daughter, anxiously looking into his face.

"Not a mite," answered her father, very cheerfully. "And s'pose I play a little longer? 'Tain't dark yet, is it? Let's walk along."

They turned a corner, and found themselves in a side street in a quiet neighbourhood. There were curtains at some of the small cabins

An open door gave a glimpse of a bright Brussels carpet. Suddenly a young girl appeared at a window, and raising the sash, very carelessly tossed out into the road a beautiful, half-withered bouquet of hothouse flowers.

Ellen quickly glanced up at the lady, who was young and had fair hair. This much she remembered always.

The bouquet rolled to the young girl's feet, then stopped. She stooped and picked up the flowers. They were only a little faded! some of the roses were quite fresh and fragrant. It must have been a beautiful bouquet once. Why did the young lady throw it away so soon?

It was nearly seven o'clock. Ellen and her father had paused before a large hotel; the space in front was crowded with men. Some of them gazed at the girl who stood so patiently beside the old organ. Her hat had slipped back, and her black hair lay in rings on her smooth, white forehead.

She did not know how pretty she was, and wondered why the men stared at her so. She knew she was tired and hungry. She wished someone would toss them some money.

A young man came down the steps. He wore a blue flannel shirt, and his coat was quite as shabby as the one her father wore. He stood in front of the organ with his hands in his pockets. For a few moments he did not speak, but seemed to be listening to the music. And then his eye fell on the flowers.

"Where'd you git 'em?" he asked suddenly.

"Found 'em," answered the girl quite as shortly.

He came a step nearer and held out his hand.

"Let me see 'em." She drew back hastily.

"Pay for 'em first. I'll sell 'em cheap," she said.

He thrust his hand still deeper in his pocket, then tossed some silver on the top of the old organ. Then he took the flowers and studied them intently as he turned the bouquet round.

"Tell me where you got 'em," he asked pleadingly.

"Found 'em," she said again. "A lady throwed 'em out the winder."

The young man said something under his breath, then turned and walked away.

Ellen had seen the colour come to his face and a hurt look in his eyes. As she looked after him he gave the bouquet a toss and it fell in the muddy street, only to be crushed the next instant by the wheels of a passing vehicle.

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"Hain't there enough money yet?" asked her father, touching her arm.

"Yes, dad," she answered. "We'll go and get some supper, and then we'll find a place to sleep."

The little parlour of Mrs. Murphy's lodging-house was crowded with miners that evening. Ellen left her father seated contentedly in a corner, and stole quietly out of the front door. She was so used to an outdoor life that she felt suffocated in a small and close room.

Some one sat on the lower step, with his head resting on his hands. He looked up and saw her as she stood hesitatingly in the doorway.

"Don't be afraid," he said kindly.

It was the young man who had bought the flowers.

She sank down on the steps, and drew her old shawl still closer about her.

"It's cold out here," said the young man. "Perhaps you'd better go in."

"I ain't cold," answered Ellen; "I'm most always outdoors."

"Where'd you say you found the posies?" he asked, suddenly raising his head.

"A young lady throwed 'em out; she had yeller hair. It was a house with white curtains at the winders. I didn't set no price on the flowers," she added hastily; "you needn't have paid so much for 'em."

"I ain't complainin' of the price," said the young fellow. "They cost me a pile to begin with."

"Did you give 'em to her?" she asked curiously.

"Yes," he answered shortly; "more fool, too!"

"They were faded," remarked the girl consolingly.

"Yes," he said bitterly. "She had 'em twelve hours."

His head dropped on his hands again.

"I wouldn't care," said Ellen softly.

The young man glanced at her. Her eyes were soft with sympathy; she looked so fair in the moonlight.

"How old are you?" he asked abruptly.

"Seventeen," she replied wonderingly.

"And you travel about with your father?"

"Yes," said the girl. "Dad likes to travel. He won't let me do nothin'," she replied proudly. "He says he can support me."

"Can you write?" looking eagerly into her pretty face.

"Yes. I was at school once."

"I hain't got no edication," said the young man sadly, "and I want to get a letter writ."

"I'll do it," she offered eagerly.

"Will you, now?" and the young fellow sprang up. "Come on into the kitchen. There's never nobody there."

In a few moments he had brought her a sheet of paper and pen and ink.

They were alone in the little kitchen that was scarcely more than a shed, and the girl seated herself at the pine table.

"Begin 'Darlin' Lizzie,'" said the young man, leaning anxiously over her shoulder.

In a cramped hand and very slowly she wrote: "Darling Lizzie."

"Tell her I love her!" he burst out. "Tell her I'm going over to Red Mountain to-morrow, but she can write to me. Jim Conroy'll read me her letter. She needn't say nothin' but yes or no. Got it all down?"

"Pretty near," said the girl. "You told me such an awful lot."

She was handling the pen awkwardly.

A bright colour had come to the young man's cheeks. His hair was light, almost golden, just the colour of the young lady's, Ellen thought. She glanced down at the letter. Would "Darling Lizzie" say yes or no?

"Done?" said her new friend. "I'll take it over to the Post-office."

He sealed the envelope carefully and put it tenderly in his pocket. Then he held out his bronzed hand.

"Good-bye, I'm much obliged to you. If I don't never see you again, I wish you good luck."

As he passed her chair a half-sovereign dropped into her lap.

The next September Ellen and her father found themselves once more crossing Red Mountain on their way to Walong. She had grown a little taller, but she looked much the same. Her dress was still shabby, and a forlorn felt hat replaced the old black straw. But her lips and cheeks were crimson with exercise and health. As they came into view of the town, they passed a group of miners who were out prospecting. One of them shaded his eyes with his hands and looked long at Ellen.

"Give us a tune!" he called out to the organ-grinder, and the old man obediently set down his organ and began to turn the crank.

Then the young miner came slowly towards the girl and held out his hand. The girl knew him at a glance, and her black eyes grew bright with pleasure.

"I didn't get no answer," he whispered.

Ellen looked sorry; then a curious gladness came to her eyes.

"Haven't you seen her?" she asked.

"No," answered the young man; "she don't live here no more."

"I'm sorry," said the girl; "I writ it plain."

"'Twasn't your fault."

Then he looked at her admiringly.

"S'pose I come to see you to-night?"

The old organ-grinder took up his burden again, and as they moved away she smiled over her shoulder at the young man with fair hair who looked after her as he leant lightly on his pick.

A month later a clergyman at Walong married them.

Ellen was very happy in her new home. There were no lace curtains at the cabin windows, for her husband was but a poor prospector, with only his youth and hope. Her father still played the old organ, but he kept near home that Ellen might see him as she glanced up from her work.

One evening during the winter her husband came home, and as he seated himself by the stove drew a yellow envelope from his pocket. It was old and worn by much handling, and bore numerous postmarks.

"What is it?" asked Ellen quickly.

"An old letter fur me," answered her husband. "They said it had bin follerin' me 'round everywhere. I hain't been in one place long the past year. It ain't much good now. S'pose you read it."

She took the letter and tore open the envelope. There were only a few lines.

It began "Darlin' Jim," and was signed "Your own Lizzie." It stated that the writer would marry him at any time.

"Don't look so!" cried her husband, as Ellen grew deadly white. She did not speak, but stood perfectly still with the letter clutched in her hand.

But her husband threw his strong arms around her.

"I'm glad I didn't get it!" he cried. "Don't you know I love you best? Nobody can't take your place now."

May Goodenough.

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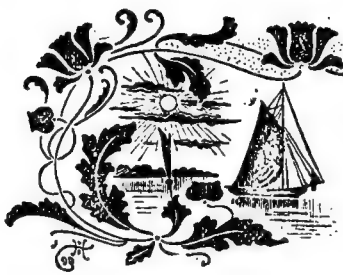

FROM PRAIRIE AND BACKWOODS.

XII.—BLACK JOHNSON, THE SCOUT.

TEXAS was my home in my early days, and at the time I am writing about I was engaged, in connection with an old friend, in stocking a sheep farm in Harrison County.

I was on my way West to purchase a large flock of an old Mexican settler. I journeyed along pleasantly enough till, on reaching a settlement on the Upper Brazos, I was somewhat disturbed by the report of a hunting party of Kioways, who had followed the buffaloes into the range through which my trail would lead me.

It was then that I was forcibly reminded of stories I had heard of the prowess of a famous hunter called Black Johnson, who had often wiped out scores of enemies, single-handed, and who was the most terrible man in all that region of terrible men.

It occurred to me that just then would be a good time to fall in with Black Johnson, and have him for a travelling companion. But I had to push on alone.

I had passed the buffalo range in safety, and there was not an Indian, I supposed, within leagues of me, when one evening, being encamped on the narrow strip of timber skirting a small spring brook, my horse broke from his tether, and escaped from me into the open prairie. This made it necessary for me to leave my shelter in pursuit of him.

I hadn't gone far when I heard a distant whoop, and, scanning the wide plain, perceived five horsemen riding at a fast gallop towards me, and was startled at the discovery of their being Indians.

I lost no time in reaching the spot where I had left my rifle and pistols, and immediately proceeded to take such hasty measures for defence as I could.

Where I had made my bivouac the stream formed a small curve, and ran deep between its banks. I instantly availed myself of this fortunate lay of the ground, and, snatching up my weapons, took my position behind the bank, which reached above my breast, and awaited the approach of the savages.

It was not long before they were upon me. But ere they had discovered my position I had levelled my trusty rifle, and dropped the foremost Indian from his saddle. Seeing this, the other painted imps, letting fly a volley of arrows, dismounted from their beasts, and filling the little grove with mad yells, charged upon me.

I had now nothing but my two single-barrelled pistols remaining, and no time to reload my rifle. But as the savages rushed towards me I gave them a shot from one of my pistols, and snatching up my rifle again, as if it contained a charge, levelled it at them.

This ruse checked them, and they sought the cover of the small growth, from which they directed their guns upon my shelter, waiting only for a sight of my head to fire.

Twice I drew their shots by the old artifice, I had somewhere read of, namely, raising my hat upon the end of my rifle. But the cunning savages soon detected the cheat, and pressed closer and closer upon me.

They were extremely wary in their movements, and careful not to expose any part of their painted carcasses to my aim. It was at this point of the fight that I withdrew my empty rifle, and was hastily charging it, while my empty pistol was deposited at hand upon the bank, when I heard a cautious and stealthy tread along the bottom of the brook in my rear.

So startled was I at this unexpected addition to my enemies, that in my agitation I let the powder fall from the palm of my hand to the ground. I knew that four Indians were still in front of me in the thicket, for they could not have reached the stream unperceived by me.

Nearer and quicker approached the steps behind me, and I was now about to leap upon the bank, and, giving all up for lost, throw myself upon the fire of the savages in front.

I had sprung upon a decayed log for that purpose, when a powerful grasp was laid upon my shoulder, and I was borne to the ground.

Before I could perceive my new assailant a voice whispered in my ear:

"Keep down, stranger, or them varmints'll make daylight shine through yer brain pan. I reckon you and I'll be good for them red rascals."

And before I could recover from this sudden surprise the new-comer raised a long double-barrelled rifle, and fired twice in quick succession, and I knew from the yells of mingled rage and pain that followed that each shot had taken effect.

The next instant the stranger leapt past me up the bank, and was engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with the remaining two savages. He made short work of it, for before I could reach the spot he had them at his feet.

"Are there any more of the varmints about?" inquired my rescurer. "Here's one, two, three, four, five on 'em; is that all?"

"Yes," said I, "there were but five of them. And now, my friend, I must thank you for your timely aid, without which, I am sure, I should not be among the living."

"What would you thank me for, stranger? Why, it's my bis'ness to upset the red varmints. I've followed it all my life, and I reckon I'd rather do it than eat, any time. They wiped out my poor father and my only sister, and I owes 'em a grudge it'll take a lot to satisfy.

"I seed the varmints making a dash for the bottom here, and I knowed they wan't arter no good. I reckoned they'd scented you out—for I diskivered yer trail two days ago—and I knowed a lone traveller'd be sure to draw the varmints out, and so I followed arter yer."

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I had now leisure to take a survey of my preserver. He was a singular-looking individual, about middle-aged, with a tall, muscular person, which was clothed in a well-greased and shiny suit of buckskin that had evidently seen much rough service. About his waist was a broad leathern belt, in which were a couple of heavy cavalry pistols, a keen, long-handled hatchet, and the scabbard of a heavy bowie-knife. These, with his long two-barrelled rifle, constituted a very efficient armament for one person to carry continually about him.

To one unaccustomed to them they would prove a rather heavy burden; but the stranger appeared not the least incommoded by them, and moved with all the lightness and grace of a young Indian warrior beneath his quiver of arrows.

In place of a hat the stranger wore on his head a sort of turban, made from folds of a piece of figured calico, which, confining his sandy locks upon the top of his head, brought his bold and rather handsome features into strong relief. But the most attractive feature about his face was a pair of large, prominent grey eyes that seemed to take in every object about him at a glance.

Such was the appearance of this man, as with one foot resting upon the breast of the savage he had last scalped he was leisurely recharging his weapons.

"I reckon, stranger," commenced my new companion, as he returned the last pistol to his belt, "yer'd better gather up yer traps and jine me at my camp to-night; and in the morning we can ride in company—that is to say, as if 'twould be agreeable to yon."

I assured him that nothing would give me greater satisfaction.

"But," said I, "perhaps our trails don't run in the same direction."

"Where might yer be bound?"

"To the Spanish colony," I answered.

"Ah, that's fortunate! My trail runs through the same settlement. So we'll catch that runaway nag of yourn, and put out to my camp. It's but a little way from here in this same creek bottom."

In another half-hour we had arrived at his camp, and, after a relishing supper of "hump" and marrow bones, I spread my blanket, and was soon forgetful of the exciting incident of the day.

Whether my companion slept or not I cannot say, for when I awoke at dawn he was already about, having changed the feeding place of the horses, and prepared a fragrant roast of buffalo flesh for an early breakfast.

Partaking of the repast, we were soon on our way to the Leon, the belts of timber which skirted the river being plainly visible from the swells of the prairie as we rode along.

I found my fellow-traveller, though not very loquacious, a very sensible and pleasant companion. He was familiar with every foot of the ground over which we travelled, and said that he had camped on every watercourse river and spring branch between the Red River of Louisiana and Mexico. But in all his conversation he never used an egotistical remark. His modesty was remarkable, and beyond what he said of killing Indians after the skirmish at my camp, he made no reference to his ever before being engaged in a fight.

The sun had scarcely passed the meridian when we came in sight of the settlement of the old Spanish colony, and my companion pointed out to me, in the edge of the river bottom, the thatched roofed rancho of Don Pancho Diego, the Mexican with whom I had contracted for a thousand head of yearling ewes. Soon we had passed the extensive corrals, in which large flocks of sheep were nightly driven, and rode up to the low porch of the Mexican's dwelling. No persons were moving about, and it was evident the occupants were enjoying their post-prandial siesta.

"Good-evening, friends!" shouted my companion; and his voice aroused a pack of shaggy shepherd dogs, who, gathering from the numerous outbuildings, quickly called the peons and the master to the door.

"Down, down, dogs!" cried an old leather-clad Mexican, as he kicked the noisy animals from his path, and approached us, still rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

"Ah, it is you, my good friend, Don Thomas?" said the old man, grasping the hand of my companion, who had not yet dismounted, covering it with kisses, and expressing the utmost delight at seeing him.

While the Mexican still clung to the Texan's hand an old matron rushed from the house, and with a cry of unbounded joy seized upon my friend's other hand, and hugging his leg, gave vent to the most extravagant expressions of satisfaction.

Nor were they satisfied with this demonstrative welcome, for when the Texan at length released himself from their embraces long enough to dismount, they again renewed the charge, and throwing themselves upon his neck, almost smothered him with their warm salutes.

After these transports were over, the Texan introduced me to the Mexican, and informed him that I was the Harrison County gentleman who had been in correspondence with him in relation to purchasing a flock of sheep. I also received a kindly welcome, and peons taking our animals, we were led into the house.

"Ah, Don Thomas!" exclaimed the old lady, after we had been seated, "we are so happy to see you again."

And then both she and her husband speaking together, commenced a long story, how the Texan had saved their lives a few years before, when their ranche had been attacked by a thieving band of Comanches.

According to their account, he, with a small party of rangers, had performed wonders of valour, for, coming upon the settlement after the savages had already set fire to many of the ranches, he attacked more than ten times his own numbers, and slaying more than half of them, saved the lives of the entire settlement, since which the Indians had not ventured to return.

During this recital I observed my companion sat uneasily in his chair, and seemed impatient of his own praises.

"Tut, tut, my good friends, you lay it on too thick!" said he, as they concluded their earnest talk. "Yer see, stranger, I and some of the boys happened along here a few years ago when we discovered a party of red-skins plundering the ranches, and what could we do but drive 'em off? That's all. To be sure, it was a pretty warm fight, and some of the boys got hurt, but after all 'twa'n't nothing to brag on."

"And he saved my life yesterday," said I to the Mexicans; and then I repeated the occurrence of the previous day, adding that I had not even yet heard the name of my preserver.

"You cannot have been long in Texas," said Don Pancho, "if you have not heard the name of Thomas Johnson, usually called Black Johnson. Then let me introduce you, gentlemen."

"Black Johnson," I repeated. "Oh, yes; I have indeed heard his name before." And then came freshly to mind the anecdotes I had heard of this brave Texan.

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STORYETTES.

We shall in future devote two pages of *Short Stories* to short, humourous stories, similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette during each week, and a copy of Mr. George Griffith's novel, "Valdar the Oftborn," to each of the next best five. In the course of time we shall particularise these stories, that is to say, one week we shall ask for Anecdotes relating to Cricket, and another week Anecdotes relating to Bicycling. At present, however, jokes of any sort will do. All attempts for this week's prize must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., by Monday, June 19th. *Post-cards only, please.*

She Favoured the Queen.

Two sisters while visiting in Ireland last summer got into conversation one day with a tenant of their hostess.

One of the girls, who is quite stout, had talked with this same tenant before, and this time she asked the old Irish woman if she would have known them for sisters.

"Well," was the answer, with a smile that would have put the blarney-stone itself to blush, "ye look alike; but yer sister's slender, while you, miss—well, you favour the Quane."

The Art of Letter Writing.

A mother sent her small boy into the country, and after a week of anxiety has received this letter:

"I got here all right, and forgot to write before; it is a very nice place to have fun. A fellow and I went out in a boat, and the boat tipped over, and a man got me out, and I was so full of water didn't know nothing for a long while. The other boy is got to be buried, after they find him. His mother came down and she cries all the time. A horse kicked me over, and I have some money to pay a doctor for curing my head. We are going to set an old barn on fire to-night, and I expect we shall have fun. I lost my watch, and I'm very sorry."

Marriage Out West.

"If there is any person present," said the minister, with due solemnity, "who knows of just cause or impediment why this woman should not be married to this man, let him speak now, or for ever after hold his peace."

"I don't think anybody will put in any objections, parson," said the stalwart young Arizona bridegroom, Mr. Roundup, as he laid his hand casually on the butt of his revolver, and looked carelessly round the room. "The only impediment I know of was a young feller by the name of Lariat, and I cleaned him out yesterday. And now, if you will go ahead, parson, and finish up this job, Miss Kactus and me are waiting."

A Poor Estate.

Some years ago a widow died intestate, leaving an infant girl. Subsequently a legal friend was appointed administrator of the widow's estate and guardian of her infant. A few days after the performance of the preliminary obligations he called and asked to be released from the duties of administrator.

"Nonsense," said the official, "the estate must be small, and the child is gentle and tractable. There is no reason whatever why you should worry yourself."

"Yes, there is. I can't administer this estate; there is not any need for it, and it seems cruel."

"Cruel! What do you mean? What does the estate consist of?"

"A bottle of castor-oil," answered the administrator.

A Pity To Waste It.

A young man having entertained a tender passion for a young woman, felt such insurmountable diffidence as to prevent his ever disclosing the fact to the fair empress of his heart, and resolved on an expedient which would bring the business to an issue.

He went to a clergyman and requested that the banns of marriage might be published according to law. When the publication was brought to her ears, she was filled with astonishment, and went to him to vent her resentment. He bore the sally with fortitude, observing that if she did not think proper to have him, she could go to the clergyman and forbid the banns. After a moment's pause, she said:

"Well, as it has been done, it is a pity that the shilling should be thrown away."

What Came of a Bad "Fist."

The late Lord Essex had a quarrel with a tenant-farmer, and sent the man a written notice to quit. The yeoman, though probably quite aware of the purport of the letter, took no notice of it, but stayed on. On the Michaelmas Day following Lord Essex evicted him by force. The farmer brought an action for heavy damages, and when before the court he produced the letter. The Judge looked at it, handed it to the jury, and finally to Lord Essex.

"Read it," said the Judge.

In vain Lord Essex wrestled with it. He knew what it meant, but how to make the writing come out in just those words was more than he was capable of imagining. At length he gave it up.

"And yet you expected the plaintiff to read that spider's crawl?" demanded the barrister who was opposed to Lord Essex.

The venerable peer was dumfounded, and the jury soon gave a verdict against him.

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Good Use for a Wooden Leg.

A BORDER farmer, whose practical mind soared above a taste for things beautiful, had the good or bad fortune to marry a wife who brought with her a wooden substitute for one of her nether limbs.

On being remonstrated with on the exercise of his choice, John answered his questioner in a manner that showed he had the shrewd utilitarian character of a Scotsman.

"Heck, sirs," says he, "it's maybe no' a verra bonnie thing to marry a woman wi' a wooden leg; but, man, she'll be awful usefu' at settin' time, when I'm puttin' doon my cabbages, neeps, and tatties. She can gang on in front an' mak' a hole wi' her stump, while I come ahint an' put in the seed."

Had to be Content with One.

A CLERGYMAN asked permission of the Bishop of St. David's to hold two livings under the prescribed value and, as he hoped it would be considered, within the prescribed distance. So he sought an interview, during which he unrolled an Ordnance map and measuring the scale of miles with a small rule he had brought with him, said:

"You see, my lord, they are within three miles as the crow flies."

The bishop put on his spectacles and followed the measurement.

"Yes," said he, "as the crow flies—I see that plainly enough; but then, you know, you are not a crow, and can't fly. By the turnpike road it is a good five miles; so I cannot permit you to hold the two livings."

A Scotch Economist.

ILLUSTRATIVE of the peculiar economy of Lord Dunsinnan, of the Scotch judicial bench, he had only one bed at Dunsinnan besides those occupied by his servants, thus to preclude the possibility of being put to the expense of entertaining visitors. It so occurred that the late George Dempster, of Dunnichen, one of the most intimate of the very few friends with whom his lordship associated, paid him a visit at Dunsinnan on one occasion, and, having tarried a little later than usual, a violent storm arose, which induced Mr. Dempster to think of remaining all night.

Dunsinnan, unwilling to admit the inhospitable arrangements of his mansion, evaded the proposition by every means possible, in the hope that the storm might abate.

At last, finding there was no likelihood of this, he sallied forth to the stable to order his friend's coach to the door, as the only effectual hint to his guest; but Dempster's coachman was not to be so caught—he positively refused to harness the horses in such a night, especially as the roads were so bad and dangerous, preferring rather to lie in the stable, if he could get no other accommodation, till daylight.

Lord Dunsinnan, thus driven to extremities, returned to his guest, and made known the dilemma in which they were placed.

"George," said he, "if you stay, you will go to bed at ten and rise at three; and then I shall get the bed after you."

Some Characteristics of Women.

A FOREIGN writer has been at pains to give a category of the points of difference between the typical women of the three leading nationalities. It is not recommended as an infallible one, but it is certainly interesting:

"A Frenchwoman loves to the end of the honeymoon, the Englishwoman her husband's whole life, the German woman for ever. The Frenchwoman takes her daughter to the ball, the Englishwoman takes her to church, the German woman gives her employment in the kitchen. The Frenchwoman has spirit and imagination, the Englishwoman has little taste, the German woman modesty. The Frenchwoman chats, the Englishwoman speaks, the German woman renders decisions. The Spanish woman kills her lover in jealousy, the Frenchwoman her rival, the German woman simply renounces, but all at some time marry someone else."

How He Got Engaged.

AN actor at the Carlo Theatre, in Vienna, has just passed away who had held a life-engagement as the monkey in pantomimes, and who was simply indispensable in such parts as required remarkable agility and suppleness.

When he was a young man, and first called on the manager to seek an engagement, he was refused with scant courtesy by that official, who was very busy, and who paid no attention to the young actor's plea that he did not know what he should do to earn his bread were employment refused him.

Sadly and silently the youth turned away, and paused at the door in deep dejection, as if he hoped the manager might reconsider his decision, but the manager made no sign, and with a melancholy sigh the actor languidly scratched his ear with his foot, as if in perplexity what to do next.

The manager burst into uncontrollable laughter at this unexpected action, and he was engaged instantly.

He was Safe Enough.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher has a class composed of a goodly number of average small boys. On a recent Sunday the lesson was upon the Babylonian captivity, and the teacher had done her best in preparing the lesson so as to attract and hold their attention. This not being always an easy matter in some of the Old Testament historical lessons, the teacher's energies were directed towards making the story life-like and realistic to her young pupils.

"Now just suppose, boys," she began, "that some army was to come here and take fathers and mothers and you yourselves prisoners, and carry you off to a strange land, and make you work as slaves, and try to make you believe in their religion instead of your own," etc.

As her vivid imagination enlarged upon the picture, she was pleased to notice that the boys looked interested, and that sundry mischievous kickings and punchings had ceased; but her satisfaction quickly ended as one patriotic urchin, amid the smiles of his comrades, exclaimed:

"Yes, mum, 'twould be rather hard lines; but there ain't a nation on earth that's big enough to do it!"

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HARDNESS OF HEART.

THE first time I saw Wetherbee was the night Mrs. Deane's baby died. There was nothing at all to be done, and the man sat between me and the dim light like some haggard impersonation of sympathy—every outline of his figure pathetically drooped. When the little face on the pillow began to grow pinched and waxen, he got up with a stifled groan and went softly out of the room.

I noticed that he steadied himself by the woodwork as he opened the door.

When I went into the kitchen a few minutes later he was sitting with his elbows on the table and his face on his hands.

And such a face!

It has haunted me ever since—will always haunt me.

There are faces with an infinite capacity for suffering. Wetherbee's was one of these, I think. It was as if every capability of the man's nature had resolved itself into a receptacle for agony and was full to the brim. I hesitated when my eye fell upon him, but he motioned me to sit down. The Deanes had only two rooms, and the father and mother were better alone with the fluttering life.

The hands of the clocks were drawing near midnight. A dog in a neighbouring kennel gave one of those plaintive howls so mournfully human. A faint breath of sweet violets came from the bunch in the open window. Wetherbee got up and looked out, as if searching the dark.

"What do you call them little flowers, ma'am—them that grow close to the ground, with the sweet, sickly smell?"

"Violets—sweet vio'ets?"

"Yes, that's it. They use them a good deal for—for little children, don't they?"

The man turned and glanced towards the other room. His face had lost some of its rigid lines.

"Yes, I believe they do. ros buds and sweet violets; they are fair and delicate like little children."

The mother's voice came to us in soft cooing sobs. The sound seemed to strike my companion like some sharp physical pain. He sat down again, wiping the heavy drops from his forehead.

"Have you any children, ma'am?"

I did not understand it then, but I know now that my presence was a relief to him. It is only a sickly, short-lived grief that nurses itself. Strong simple natures, suffering keenly, follow their instinct, and their instinct is to forget.

"No, sir, I have no had children."

The man looked at me with the nearest approach to divine pity I have ever seen in any human face.

"Did they die when they were little, ma'am?"

I shook my head. "I have no children."

A shade of disappointment went over my companion's face. Then the anguish that had found an outlet in compassion returned to it. He shook his head sadly,

"Then you don't know, you don't know."

Something in the sound of his voice invited sympathy.

"You have buried a little child—more than one, perhaps?" I spoke as gently as I could.

"Yes, ma'am. I lost my baby. It wasn't exactly like other folks losing their children. I think it hurt me here." He drew his hand across his fore ead slowly.

A low heart-broken cry came to us from the other room, and the mother's voice burst into a flood of passionate tenderness. The little spark of life had gone out. The cry seemed to stab my companion; he started up with a shuddering groan, and stood like a man face to face with some terrible memory. I had risen to leave the room, but his face held me.

"In Heaven's name, what is it, sir? Can I help you?"

He sank into a chair beside the table and buried his face in his arms hopelessly.

"No, ma'am, nobody can help me. Even God has left me."

The words came back to me again and again as I robed the little form for its last narrow cradle. He came into the room at daybreak with a cluster of violets, dewy and fragrant. I laid them on the dead baby's breast and clasped the little hands over them, like two pearls. All the hard lines melted out of the man's face; it glowed with the exquisite radiance of fatherliness.

"The little thing's better off, don't you think so, ma'am? It might have grown up and broke loose from God some way."

"Yes; but God could keep it from sin as easily as he could take it's life," I answered quietly.

He raised his dark, luminous eyes quickly, with a questioning look.

"Don't you believe in God, ma'am?"

"Of course," I answered, smiling.

The man stayed near me during the funeral, making himself useful at every opportunity. There was something peculiarly gentle in his helpfulness.

I spoke to Mrs. Deane of him afterwards.

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"Wetherbee? Oh, yes, we think a great deal of Wetherbee. He has a room on this floor. He used to come in often when—when baby was alive. I never saw anyone fonder of children."

"Do you know anything of his wife?"

"Not very much. They don't live together. People say it's her fault. Wetherbee won't let anybody blame her. He says she's one of the saints. You know some men get those notions about a woman, and nothing will cure them. There's Ivson next door; he says his wife is tender-hearted because she cries whenever things don't go to suit her. A good many men are queer that way. If they have a poor wife they blame everything on themselves, and if they have a good one they take all the credit. I always felt sorry for Wetherbee. He don't seem like a drinking man."

"Does he drink?"

"Well, we heard he did, but we haven't seen any signs of it since he's lived here. Baby always went to Wetherbee. She'd put her little cheek against his, and coo in the cunningest way when he sang or talked to her. Children generally take to a quiet, mild-spoken man, you know. I never could think there was anything bad about Wetherbee."

In the autumn the Deanes moved to a house in the suburbs, and I lost sight of my new acquaintance. But the memory of the man haunted me. I learnt that he was a cabinetmaker by trade, and worked in a shop in Peckham. I used to take him a little mending now and then, exchanging a few friendly words about his work or the weather. He always met me with his own peculiarly lonely smile. Something was evidently wearing upon him. The transparent pallor of his face struck me one morning as he carried some piece of work I had brought him to the window, and stood examining it carefully in the light.

"You are overworking yourself, Wetherbee," I said. "By-and-bye you will not be able to work at all."

He looked up quickly with a puzzled expression. I do not think the idea of sickness as connected with himself had ever occurred to him before.

"Oh, no, ma'am. I've always been a strong, healthy man."

"Perhaps you have; but you are neither strong nor healthy now. If you fall ill you must let me know."

He made no reply, but looked out of the window absently, as if my words had suggested a new train of thought to him. When I left the shop I turned to close the door. I saw him still standing with his eyes fixed meditatively, and the puzzled look deepening on his face.

The next time I chanced to be in Trent Street there was a stranger at Wetherbee's bench. I went into the shop and spoke to the proprietor.

"Wetherbee? He didn't come down this morning; been ailing for some time, I think. Got an excellent workman in his place—anything we can do for you, madam?"

The poor fellow was ill, then—ill and alone in that cheerless lodging-house. Nothing could be more drearily desolate. I went straight to the doctor's and talked it over with Esculapius, and by nightfall the invalid was lying on a coach before our sitting-room fire, his pale brown eyes wandering about the room with the dazed expression of a man who had never been taken care of in his life.

"I don't think it's anything, ma'am. I was just a trifle dizzy when I got up—as if everything gave out suddenly. I'm afraid I shan't try to get well *if* I stay here."

Esculapius looked him over critically and reported to me in the evening:

"The fellow has let go his hold on life. Sing to him now and then. Keep the room sunny and flowers on the table. Let him talk when he will and say what he will. Presently he will tell you the medicine that will cure him, if a cure is possible."

I followed these directions carefully, but my patient refused to talk. His silence grew almost oppressive. He would lie for hours with his yellowish-brown eyes fixed on the ceiling and an air of uncomplaining apathy indescribably touching. His whole manner was retrospective. There was a pitiful lack, not of hope, but of futurity, in the man's face. I grew impatient under his stillness.

"Is there no one you would like to see, Wetherbee—no friend or acquaintance for whom I can send?"

I regretted the words instantly. A painful flush went over his face, leaving it whiter than before.

"No, ma'am—nobody, that is, who would come. I have no friends, ma'am."

He closed his eyes and lay quite still. A few weeks had wrought a wonderful change in his face. It was thinner—more spiritual—as if life were receding slowly and without pain. Suddenly he raised his eyelids and sought my gaze. A feverish determination seemed to take the place of his habitual apathy.

"I want to tell you something, ma'am—I ought to have told you long ago. Sometimes I thought I would, but you seemed to have goodness to save your own soul, and some to spare for other people; and I needed it, ma'am, and I took it. I don't ask you to forgive me, but it's come to me lying here that maybe you'll not turn your back on me like the rest. I don't blame them. God made them, and it isn't likely He'd make anybody better than Himself. It stands to reason that them that want to be like Him would turn their backs on such as me. And *she* is like Him. I never saw her do a wrong thing in my life. You mustn't take anything I say as blaming *her*, ma'am. It's all been my own wickedness, and it's but right I should pay for it. Only it seems wrong that she should pay for it too; it don't seem as if God was just fair, always.

"I told you once I'd lost my baby, but I didn't tell you how it happened. I couldn't then. We never had any other children. Perhaps that was the reason he always seemed brighter and prettier to us than most babies. He was just a year old when—when—it happened, ma'am; just big enough to stand by a chair and shake his head, and talk the kind of babyish talk without words that nobody understands but fathers and mothers. He had the bravest big blue eyes, like his mother, and—you'll excuse me, ma'am, but I never talked of him to anybody before, and I see him all the time just as he looked *that* morning, settin' on the bed in his white flannel gown, kicking his little red socks off his legs, and lookin' out at me so saucy an' mischievous from under his curls.

"You said you never had any children, ma'am. It's queer how foolish people will be about things every baby does. I expect you've noticed it a good deal. If he'd lived to be a man and discovered another Australia, I couldn't have been any prouder of him than I was the morning his mother and me thought he spoke my name. I s'pose it's always the way.

"He wasn't very well one morning—just droopy and dull. I went and fetched the doctor, and he said it was

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nothing serious. He wrote a prescription, though, and said if he showed any signs of fever by midnight we might give him a powder. Little things come back very distinct sometimes. I recollect I was out of money, the guv'nor had been behind with our pay for a couple of weeks, and Janet went to the drawer and got me half-a-crown of h rs. She always did a little sewing for the neighbours. It wasn't in her to be idle.

"I don't know whether I can make you understand the rest or not, ma'am. I don't understand it myself. I never was what you'd call a drinkin' man. My father died of drink—a curse to himself and everybody else. I always thought it was that which made me hate liquor, and yet, all along, even when I was a boy, there was a longin' for it that stayed with me every minute.

"It got the better of me a few times, and when it did—you've read in the Bible of them possessed of devils?—well, it was like that, ma'am. When I went into the chemist's that night they carried in a man that had fainted in the street and gave him a glass of brandy. I smelt it and saw him drink it. All at once everything in me seemed to turn to thirst. If you had held the whole world in one hand and that little g'ass of reddish fiery stuff in the other, and offered me my choice, I'd have taken the drink. I wasn't a man any longer—just a terrib'e, senseless, wild creature, ma'am. I took the money—Janet's money—out of my pocket, flew to a pub, and called for liquor. It's hard for you to believe it—it's hard for me, lookin' back through things that came afterwards.

"I don't remember much more, only wandering about like a bad dream, and staggerin' home towards morning. I think it was Janet's face that sobered me. She didn't get up when I came in—just sat still by the bed, with her eyes wide open and hard and her face was as if it was cut out of stone. The baby was asleep. It came to me then, like something that had happened a long time ago, about the fever at m dnight and the powder. I went up to the bed and laid my hand on his forehead. There wasn't any fever, ma'am. My baby—my baby was d ad."

The speaker's voice sank to a hoarse, unnatural whisper. The look I had seen on his face in he kitchen at Dean's came back, int nsified by his thinness and pallor. It was some time before he spoke again.

"I can't go over all the res , ma'am. If Janet had found fault with me, or said anything, it would have been easier, I think. But she went about as if she was frozen, as still and white as death, with a look in her eyes like the blade of a knife. When they had dressed him all in white and put him in his coffin, with them pale little flowers in his hands—violets, I think you said they called 'em—she came and stood over him and spoke to me. She said some cruel things then—not crueller than I deserved, not crueller than was true—but they're things I can't say over again, ma'am; not that I've forgotten them, or ever will, but I think you'll understand.

"Them was the last words she ever said to me. She went away after the funeral, and I've never seen her since. She'd took a vow, she said. I'm not a religious man, as you know, ma'am, and I don't exactly understand these things. I've tried to send her money a good many times, but it always comes back to me without a word.

"I think I've told you everything. I'll not blame you for washin' your hands of me. You've been very kind to me thus far, and I've hung on to your kindness a good deal. You've done it without knowing what kind of a man I was; but somehow I can't think that'll trouble you much—them ain't the things that fret us lookin' back. I've thought a good many times if you could go to her—if you could have her here instead of me—things would be nearer right. But, after all, I doubt if she'd let you do for her as you've done for me; it's not her way to be troub'esome. That's all, ma'am."

The speaker stopped abruptly, closing his eyes. There was no eager looking for my verdict any an iety he may have felt on that point being allayed by my face or forgotten in more painful thoughts.

"Have you any idea where your wife is living now?" I asked.

"Yes, ma'am. She has a room in Fell Street. I think it like'y she'll go back to her people when she has something ahead."

Of course, I determined upon a reconciliation. Esculapius was willing, but not hopeful.

I found her without difficulty in a little back room on the second floor. The moment I saw her face I knew that my errand was useless. Not a strong face—I might have hoped to convince mistaken strength—but weak, bloodless, immovable. There was a well-thumbed Bible on the stand beside her and some unfinished needle-work on the floor. Everything was scrupulously neat.

I glanced about for a flower, an ornament, something to arouse a shadow of hope. There was no generous disorder, nothing lovely in the room. Even in the woman's dress of plain print, colour had been sacrificed to cleanliness; and the woman herself, sitt ng in the midst of this chilling accuracy, her colourless hair combed smoothly about her colourless face, had an air of melancholy rectitude repellant and touching. The work I had brought required but few directions, and when they were given I rose to go.

"Do you live alone?" I asked, my real errand growing more difficult every moment.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do you not find it very lonely?"

"Yes, ma'am. I have been lonely ever since my baby died. It has pleased Heaven to bruise me."

"But have you no one left to love or care for? Grief so easily turns to love, you know."

The woman was tying up the work I had brought her. She drew the twine tight and fastened it firmly. There was not the slightest tremour in her voice when she spoke:

"Did *he* send you to me?"

"Your husband? No. He told me of you, and I came because I wished to—because I was sorry for him and you. Can I help you in any way?"

"No, ma'am."

The woman took her Bible from the stand, and read, in a slow, revere ential monotone:

"'And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath, and her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and d sallowed her not, then all her vows shall stand and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.'"

The cold *finality* of her voice went over me like a breath from an underground dungeon.

"But her husband may disallow her. After all, is it not for him to say whether her oath is binding or not?" Instinctively I grasped at any kind of slavery as less odious than that which she was under.

She had not raised her eyes and went on as if prepared for my appeal.

"'But if her husband disallowed her *on the day that he*

heard it, then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips wherewith she bound her soul of none effect, and the Lord shall forgive her.' It's no use, ma'am. I've gone over it a good many times here by myself, and there's no way out of it. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and he knoweth no variableness. I don't know what *he* told you, ma'am, but when I sat there by my baby's bed, and saw death creepin' over its little face, I vowed if he had murdered it I'd turn my back on him for ever. And when I told him standing over the coffin he didn't open his lips. God put it into my heart to make the vow and he'll help me to keep it, ma'am."

Esculapius was right—the case was hopeless.

I made one last appeal, with my hand on the door:

"What if your husband were ill—suffering?"

The white-fringed eyelids quivered a little.

"It is Heaven's will."

I drew a long breath in the generous sunlight below. The atmosphere I had left clung to me like a damp mist. The air from the street blew clean and warm. A stalwart countryman was passing with an apple-cheeked girl on his arm. I noted the sprig of green in his buttonhole, and the cheap white ribbons fluttering about his companion's bashful face. The wan unhappy woman sitting up there in the sunless light of the window seemed the very ghost of renunciation—martyrdom robbed of all its fervour and glow.

"It was a case of spiritual petrifaction," I said to Esculapius. "She has experienced a change of heart—carries about a fossil in the place of the one God gave her. There is no hope, absolutely none."

I did not tell Wetherbee of my visit to his wife. If he suspected it my silence made him aware that it was fruitless. He was not able to leave his bed now, and the quiet unsatisfied face on the pillow did not make my memories of the fair-haired fanatic more kindly. Esculapius shook his head privately over the condition of my patient.

"The life-preserving forces are lying idle for lack of steam," he said, "and the rust of idleness is eating them up. In common phrase, the man is dying of a broken heart."

There was no acute physical suffering to make the invalid forget his grief. I was sometimes tempted to wish it otherwise.

He opened his strange, luminous eyes on me suddenly one evening, and beckoned me to the bedside.

"Do you think there's a Heaven, ma'am?" he whispered.

The question came to me strangely; as if some one standing in an open door should turn and ask me if there were anything without.

"I think there is an eternity where we see and are seen more clearly," I answered.

"Do you think there'll be a great gulf fixed between her and me?"

"No, Wetherbee. I believe that the gulf which has been between you on earth will be bridged."

A tremulous, uncertain peace stole over his face. I went back to the window where Esculapius was standing looking out into the rainy, cheerless dusk. He laid his hands on my shoulders, looked into my face tenderly, and repeated dreamily:

> "Behold, we *know* not anything,
> We only *hope* that good may fall,
> Far off at last, at last to all,
> And every winter turned to spring."

"Your patient will die to-night, little woman."

I stared at him helplessly. I had not realised that it could really come to that—that the man would die there alone—worse than alone. Could nothing be done? Was there nothing stronger than superstition? I took a scrap of paper from the table, and wrote hastily by the fading light: "Your husband is dying. Will you come?"

When my messenger was gone I came back to the sick-room to count the slow, monotonous hours. Outside the rain was beating pitilessly. I could see the bare, unlovely room, the pallid, grief-stricken woman fighting the battle with her terrible vow. There was no struggle here. The shadow of death was creeping over the tired face on the pillow gently.

"Them little flowers—do you think—if you'd ask her—she'd put them in my hands, ma'am?—perhaps I'd know——"

There were footsteps behind me, then a low, smothered cry, and wet garments brushed my hand. She bent over him, holding his hands, and cooing like a mother to her babe. A mild, ineffable peace came into his dying face.

"You are right, ma'am—the gulf's bridged—up here—Janet——"

The stillness of death stole through the room.

I went up to Wetherbee's wife presently, still kneeling with her head bowed on her husband's lifeless hand, and laid my hand on her hair.

It was wet with rain.

I smoothed it gently, but she did not move.

The little hard-hearted woman was dead.

JASPER FAULKNER.

MARY had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.
Its fleece was white as snow:
But Mary's lamb has grown;
And now she'd rather walk three miles
Than face that lamb alone.

A POET writes: "I know sweet songs I cannot sing." That poet has our gratitude.

A MAN was brought up the other day charged with marrying again while his first wife, Ann, was alive. He pleaded not guilty, declaring that his first wife's existence was not proved, because Ann is an indefinite article.

CUSTOMER: "What's the charge?"

Barber: "Fourpence."

Customer: "Fourpence? Why, I thought you only charged twopence for a shave?"

Barber: "Yes, sir; but you see you have a double chin."

100,000 PRIZES,

Valued at £10,000,

ARE BEING GIVEN AWAY.

Full particulars appeared in last week's paper, and will appear again shortly.

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An Angel of Light.

DOT CLAVERING was just about the sunniest, daintiest morsel of humanity you ever saw, yet on this particular afternoon as she sat beside her husband watching, her little face was strangely sad and her willing fingers idle.

Dick, her husband, had found her while she was trapsing the country with a cartload of gipsies, and straightway falling in love with her, had given his birthright and much else to the "queen" in exchange for Dot's hand. The exchange, too, had been most providential, for the "merry gitanas" were in the act of training Dot to play havoc with Gentile hearts—and property. Dick's "two hundred down" had ransomed her. Dot's going had moved the "queen" to tears, since when, and her immediate marriage with Dick, she had proved herself thrice worthy of his love.

But Dick had had the misfortune of being born without a trade, and, having no rich relations to help him, had fought bravely till he could fight no longer. Thus it was, through the combined powers of want and bodily weakness, he now lay prostrate on a sick bed, with his watchful wife beside him.

The sun had slipped down the sky, and was burning its way into the horizon when Dick unclosed his eyes.

"Ah, Dot," he murmured, "still watching? I suppose our ship hasn't come home yet, eh?"

A tear dropped softly on to his hand as Dot whispered:

"No, darling, not yet."

"How much money have we left now, Dot?" he asked after a pause.

"Only your father's guinea, Dick. I'm afraid that must go to the doctor. He's a hard man, and says he won't come again unless we pay him something to-day. Yes, Dick, I'm afraid it will have to go, for I couldn't bear to lose you. Oh! my husband."

Her head fell upon his breast and she wept bitterly. Anon, Dick succeeded in quieting her, when for awhile they rested in one another's arms silently.

"There's no one we could ask to help us, is there Dick?" inquired Dot, looking up.

"None that I know of."

"Oh Dick, I don't like to ask it, but for your sake, wouldn't that lady who loved and wanted you—wouldn't she lift us out of this trouble?"

"No, Dot, no. How could I accept help from her? Besides, I don't even know where she is. It's two years since I saw her, and you forget—I wounded her so deeply."

Dot sighed, but was cut short in the act by the entrance of the doctor, who fussed into the room, fussed about the room, shook his head, pocketed the guinea, and fussed out of the room in about as little time as it takes to tell.

"There goes our very last," said Dot, referring to the guinea Dick treasured so much. "Beast!" added she, referring to the doctor.

"Hush, hush, darling!" remonstrated her husband, drawing her lovely head gently to his breast again. "Remember, even now he hasn't got his due."

"All right, Dick darling, if I mustn't say it I'll think it."

Dick laughed; the laugh softened into a smile, and his weary eyes closed. Presently he slept.

For a few minutes Dot's longing eyes took in every quiver of his lips, and her own echoed them. For a few minutes her loving heart rocked out urgent prayers. For a few minutes she battled wildly with her grief and with the mad *abandon* her early life had begat in her. Then she arose and went to the cupboard. Not a bite or a bone!

"Poor Mother Hubbard!" she sighed, tying her bonnet strings with unnecessary vigour.

Seating herself by the bedside again, she leant over and touched her husband's forehead lightly with her lips. He made no movement, but smiled, thinking he dreamt.

"When," said Dot softly to herself, "when a man's hungry and not proud, he begs. When a woman's neither, she borrows. When a wife's broken hearted because her husband—the best unburied—wants for a crust, she steals!—steals!!"

With one more look at the sleeper, she went out and passed into the street.

* * * *

There was a great noise and hubbub, the racing of many feet, the lifting of many voices, and a great crowd. People were rushing from every direction like little needles to a vast magnet. Children were swung along on the skirts of inquisitive mothers, and squealed at their mode of locomotion. Men with tool baskets sawed their way through the eager mob, taking pieces of its apparel with them. Lifted fairly off her feet, our little Dot went with the rest, panting breathlessly as she found herself deposited on the fringe of the crowd.

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Two voices—one which Dot recognised as belonging to the doctor she called a "beast"—were raised in stern altercation.

"You stole my purse," cried the voice of the doctor.

"You liar," cried the second voice.

"I felt your hand in my pocket," cried the doctor again.

Before anything else was said, in fact, before Dot had time to realise anything, she felt a hand thrust within hers, leaving some article there, and felt her fingers pressed tightly about it.

In another moment the crowd had surged heavily, and Dot was squeezed beyond its outskirts.

She was alone, every living soul abroad being a unit in the excited mass.

Dazed, dimly conscious of something having happened, she walked swiftly away till she attained a sequestered by-street with a single lamp.

Here she stopped to recover breath, to think, and to frighten herself with foolish forbodings. Here she looked at the article so rudely forced upon her, and found it to be a purse. She opened it.

Inside was what appeared to her to be a wealth of coins and amongst them, the identical guinea she had recently given the doctor!

What should she do? To return the purse would be to place herself under suspicion, and if she were arrested what would become of Dick? "No doubt," she argued, "somebody near her was an accomplice of the actual thief. The purse, no doubt, had gone the rounds of many accomplices, and had at last come to her by mistake, being meant for the accomplice near her."

Whatever should she do?

She dared not seek the doctor and tell him all, for he was a suspicious man, and knew she disliked him.

Whatever on earth *could* she do, but go straight home to her husband and explain the affair to him? Accordingly she went, like the good little wife she was.

Dick was awake when she returned and greeted her fondly. He remarked upon her burning cheeks and excited manner, and hearing she had something to tell, prepared to listen.

Then Dot began her story, recounting everything from the time he fell asleep—telling of her struggles and intentions, and concluding with the incident of the purse, and how it belonged to that "beast of a doctor."

Dick listened, with a cloud gathering surely in his eyes. Hearing how the spirit of her early associates possessed her, he shivered; hearing how she had gone out intending to get food *somehow*, he raised himself anxiously on his elbow, watching her keenly. Then at last, when he heard how it was the doctor's purse which had been stolen, his trust in her broke away, leaving him frantic.

"Woman!" he thundered. "What have you done?"

"Dick—husband!" she cried piteously. "Don't watch me like that. How have I done wrong?"

Her look of voiceless anguish struck him as hypocrisy, and with increasing anger he cried:

"You are a thief! *You* stole this purse! Do you think I forgot your girlhood's training? Do you think I don't know that you hungered to retain that guinea even as I did? Do you think I was blind to your hatred of the doctor? Oh, false, false woman!"

She uttered no word of reply, but stood, big-eyed with agony, staring at him. She stood with hands clutching her breast as if to stay the biting of some fearful reptile. She stood for a minute like a carving in rock—sightless, dumb, lifeless. Then she swayed, twice—thrice, and fell with a moan that would have broken the heart of a hangman.

* * * * *

Recovering, she found herself alone. She noted, too, the absence of the purse, and rightly divined her husband had gone to return it.

Steadying herself by various articles in the room, she gripped the bed-rail, took a few more steps, and sank down where lately Dick had lain—her head where his had been.

Anon she arose, tied on her poor little bonnet and crept softly away, thinking the world a limitless chamber she had got into by mistake.

Within an hour, her husband returned and looked wistfully around. The sun had risen often, but it never, never rose on a sadder sight than him—kissing the spot where his head had rested, damp with little Dot's tears.

* * * * *

"Wanted—A young lady to act as amanuensis to authoress. Apply personally, etc., etc."

"Well, I don't know," sighed Dot, all alone in a very small room, "but I must do something. I can't do what other women do, I'm not strong enough. I wonder whether she would engage me? Authors, I suppose are dreadfully mad and touchy, but I can write and spell—Dick taught me."

She breathed deeply as she re-read the advertisement and trembled as she thought of applying.

"She won't eat me if I don't suit," Dot told herself, mustering enough courage to smile at her thought.

Anyway, she looked dainty enough to eat, as with every token of nervousness she approached the dispensary of wonderland and romance.

"Dick was an author once," she whispered, turning the final corner, "and got two pounds two shillings from an editor or somebody. He wrote a book which was going to make him famous once, but he lost it, or had it stolen or something. 'Such a big book,' he used to say, laughing, 'big as that house, Dot.' Oh——"

Her soliloquy was brought to a sudden stop by finding herself in front of the very house she sought.

"Oh, goodness!" she said in comical distress, "I shall never be able to pull the bell."

But she did pull the bell somehow, and in a very few minutes was conducted by an overpowering footman into the presence of the advertiser.

At once, on entering the room, Dot was impressed by its serene stillness, and by a pervading suggestion of emerald.

All the appointments were of green, and the glorious summer sun flooded through windows hung with green silken curtains, causing the room to resemble a glade in a wood.

The change from the hall and street beyond was so abrupt as for the minute to deprive her of all power to distinguish individual objects, and before this power returned a calm, sweet voice addressed her:

"You have come to help me in my work?" it said.

"Y—yes, if you will have me," replied Dot, sighting the figure of a woman seated in a shady corner.

One of those silences peculiar to people of ready sympathies ensued this introduction, and it is not too much to say that each woman fell deeply in love with the other's voice right away, and longed for more.

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"Would you mind coming to me?" asked the lady, holding out both hands towards the door against which Dot stood.

Dot came impulsively; but when scarcely half-way stood stock-still, looking.

It was not the beauty of that radiant face, nor the spirit of prophecy it possessed, neither was it the golden glory of the hair, which had brought her thus to a standstill, looking. It was none of these; only the closed and sightless eyes!

For many minutes after that—minutes made holy by a Christ-like giving of love, these two women sat locked in each other's arms at peace. After awhile the lady disengaged a hand, suffering it to steal gently over Dot's features; and as it touched her eyes and lips, the lady murmured "beautiful, beautiful," after which silence reigned again, lasting till the evening breezes blew the day away.

"You will start to-morrow?" inquired the lady as Dot was leaving.

"Yes, yes, to-morrow, thank Heaven!"

"That is good," said the lady; and Dot went.

Dot got to work with a will, and so great was the encouragement of love, that her output surprised even herself. Every day her attachment to her employer grew more intense, and as she was engaged upon some proofs she knew the publisher was clamouring for, she often, of her own free will, stayed working till very late at night.

"Don't sit any longer to-night, dear," said the lady, hearing Dot sigh as she plied her pen, "your poor eyes must be very tired."

This was the night when Dot had reckoned to have the proofs ready, and she was labouring furiously to keep her word.

"Just one more sheet," she said, "and then I've done."

Her pen and thoughts flew together, and after a few minutes' writing she sat back with a deep breath.

"Why," she asked, glancing at the title page, "why have you put yourself down as 'R. C.'? Why not your own name or initials?"

"I had made up my mind to tell you that to-night; but it's too late now. It's all a long story, but I think one that will interest you. It refers to my past. I'll tell you to-morrow."

Accordingly, after spending the morrow morning wondering what on earth "R. C." could stand for, Dot settled herself down beside her friend, prepared to listen.

"You must know," began the lady, "that my life has not always been so loveless and dark as it is now. No, once I had both my sight and something to love. Probably no one but God knows *how* I loved. But I loved wrongly—not a worthless object, dear—but a man who could not return my love."

"Unnatural wretch!" muttered Dot, pressing her friend's arm passionately and kissing her.

"Hush, dear! don't say that. He never sought my love, so I cannot blame him. But oh! how I loved him—how I loved him!"

Her utterance ceased—hushed into silence by memory. Pre ently she felt Dot's tears upon her hand and with a great effort she went on.

"I was already known to a few publishers," she said, "but had done nothing of any account. He was unknown, but had written a book I said would make him famous. He refused my offer of introductions and left me; but not before I had stolen the book from his keeping. I meant to get it published myself, thinking he might accept fame where he refused love. But then, after he had gone, I fell ill of a malady which, departing, left me blind."

"The coward—the brute—the monster!" cried Dot, her face streaming with tears.

"No, no, he was none of those. It seemed very hard for me, but you cannot blame a man for not marrying whom he did not love. Well, when I recovered, I put his book about among my friends. One of them accepted it, and with your willing aid, I have just got it right for publication. They are the proofs of his book you have lately finished revising; 'R. C.' are his initials and—he is coming here to-day!"

Dot made little fists and fierce eyes when she heard this, but refrained from speaking.

"Yes; privately I have had him sought out and he is coming here to-day, for whom or for what he does not know."

Even as she spoke the hall bell rang and the overpowering footman announced:

"Mr. Clavering!"

In another moment Dot's husband stood confronting her. None but those who have taken part in a like situation could imagine the hush which fell upon that trio then. Dot and Dick, each with quivering lips and heaving bosoms, stood with eyes inquiringly addressed to the other's face. Each heart went forth with all the power of a mighty love deferred, yet each was halting to make the first advance.

Then slowly, very slowly, like the first dim dawn of reason, a remembrance of why he had come, crept into Dot's mind and her eyes reverted to the face of her blind friend. It was shining with a holy radiance. The light of a transfigured presence rested upon it, and it seemed divine.

Like a spirit the blind woman glided to Dot's side, and kissing her tenderly, she whispered:

"It is far—far better as it is, dear," and had passed from the room.

"Rosa!" said Dick.

But the door had closed behind her.

* * * * *

When after a long absence she reappeared, it would have done your heart good to see how Dot freed herself from Dick's arms and hugged Rosa into the room. And it would have done your heart still more good to see how she rushed against Dick and back again to Rosa, kissing first one, then the other, and nearly smothering both. And to have heard all the silly things she said in an infinitely beautiful way—why, it was enough to warm the heart of the great wide world.

"And so you knew all the while," she cried to Rosa when at length she found voice to speak rationally, "that Dick and I were married?"

"How could I help knowing when you told me so yourself?" asked Rosa, smiling.

"Yes, but how did you know he was the one we were working for so late at night?"

"There is only one 'R. C.' in the world," said Rosa simply.

Suddenly, Dot realised how vast was the spirit of self-sacrifice displayed in Rosa's actions. She realised what awful sufferings and conflicts must have filled her lonely heart, and flinging her arms again round her blind friend's neck, she whispered:

"Are you an angel?"

Dunstan Denn.

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You Fill in the Coupon. We do the Rest.

But fill it in at once. Only two more coupons will appear.

If the Figures you write on this Coupon should be the only correct forecast made, it will bring you in £1,000. In the last Competition two coupons similar to this brought in £500 each to two lucky individuals.

TO win this substantial sum of money, all you have to do is to fill up the coupon below, giving in the proper place the number of births and the number of deaths which will occur in the thirty-three great towns in England and Wales for the week ending July 1st, 1899.

Then write down your name and address, and ask the newsagent or bookstall clerk from whom you obtained this copy of "*S.S.*" to insert his name and address in the space provided. Although such a course is obviously to his advantage, it is not compulsory for the coupon to bear his signature.

Newsagents and bookstall clerks may sign any number of coupons.

To the person whose attempt is correct we will pay the sum of **£1,000.**

To the newsagent or bookstall clerk whose name appears on the winning coupon we will pay the sum of **£100,** and **£5** to each of the boys attached to the bookstall from which the paper was bought.

If no competitor estimates the correct number of births and deaths, the £1,000 will be awarded to the individual whose forecast is most nearly correct.

In the event of two or more persons being correct, the £1,000 will be divided amongst them. This condition applies also to the £100 for the newsagent or bookstall clerk, and the £5 for bookstall boys.

One competitor may send in any number of attempts.

It must be clearly understood that all persons who enter for this competition must abide by the decision of the Editor in any question that may arise in connection with the competition.

As a guide to your estimate we give below the number of Births and Deaths which have taken place in the thirty-three largest towns in England and Wales for the corresponding period during the past three years.

The figures published by the Registrar-General will be taken as correct. On December 2nd, 1898, a competition similar to this was declared legal by the Appeal Court.

Registered during the Week Ending July 4th, 1896.		Registered during the Week Ending July 3rd, 1897.		Registered during the Week Ending July 2nd, 1898.	
Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.
6,372	3,691	7,115	3,106	6,575	3,203

All attempts to be addressed to the Editor, Short Stories, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and the envelope to be marked in the left-hand corner with the word: "Births."

This Competition closes on Wednesday, June 28th.

S. S.

My estimate is - { *Births* ..... / *Deaths* ..... } *Write in large Figures.*

Name .....

Address .....

*Newsagent or Bookstall Clerk** .....

.....

* If a bookstall clerk, the name of the station will be sufficient.

THIS PRIZE IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH "PEARSON'S WEEKLY," "HOME NOTES," "SUNDAY READER," AND "PASTIMES."

THE RED MEN OF THE DUSK

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ROMANCE.

By JOHN FINNEMORE.

CHAPTER XXXI.

My Mask Falls.

In the early afternoon of that same day I was digging in the garden, and lifting my eyes between almost every spadeful to snatch a glance at Enid, who was walking slowly up and down the bowling green in full sight. She dared not approach, for within a dozen yards of me another man was busy, one of Sir John's men, as grim and dry an old fellow as his master.

I turned the earth steadily, to all appearance a laborious, uncomplaining drudge, while secretly I revelled in all the glory of the bright April day, and felt the rich sweetness of my love's presence as added brightness to the sunshine.

The warm air was loaded with the haunting perfume of the great orchard near by, and the tender new leaves of the tall limes beside the green caught the sunshine and filtered it delicately upon her as she moved to and fro, herself the fairest thing among all the fresh beauties of the spring. I cannot describe how cheerful and contented I was as I made play with the clumsy spade that afternoon; 'tis true times were not of the gayest, but I was thankful for the luck we had enjoyed so far, and trusted time would better it. Meantime Enid was stealing continued glances at me, was thinking of me ever.

A trample of heavy riding boots sounded along the gravelled path beside the house. Before I turned my head I knew who it was, and felt no surprise to see Jack Postgate hurrying to place himself beside Enid. That I ground my teeth and uttered some wicked wishes concerning him I do not deny, and I did not resume my work until the sight of his father, spying the place over with keen, ferreting glance bade me beware.

I had seen their meeting before this happened, and had something to think of as I delved. Enid had received him with her usual civility, and Jack seemed transported. He burgeoned; he seemed to swell; he became all fire, all assiduity.

"What maggot has entered the fool's head now?" thought I. "He has at least the port of a happy lover." And at the idea of how far Jack was from the haven where he would be, I smiled to myself and forgave upon the spot his temporary advantage.

Sir John went back into the house, and now I saw Enid stepping in the direction of the path Jack had just followed. He sprang forward and cut her off, talking eagerly and earnestly, and she turned on her heel and walked rapidly towards the upper part of the green where a side door led into the house.

The bowling green was a long strip lying along the western face between the house and the moat. On two sides it was bounded by the walls, along the third ran the water, ten feet deep, and thirty feet wide, and only at the southern end was it open. It was the southern path from which Enid had turned away, and now she was making for the private door which opened directly on the turf.

I rested my hands on my spade and watched her swiftly-moving figure. I forgot my disguise, I forgot everything. I had no eyes for aught save those two. I saw him catch her up as she disappeared behind a tall clump of bushes. She did not come into sight again for an instant, and then I saw her start forward, struggling in the arms of Jack Postgate, as he vainly attempted to enfold her lithe, swaying figure in his embrace and snatch kisses from her lips.

I never ran so fast in my life as I flew over the garden, and down the bowling-green at that moment.

"Jack Postgate! You villain! You hound!" I screamed as I darted upon him and seized him by the throat, just as Enid sprang aside.

He had no time to lay hand upon his weapons; he fixed his clutch in my wrists, tearing furiously to rip away my grip, his eyes and tongue lolling horribly. Collecting my strength, I flung him furiously from me, and at the instant

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received a stunning blow upon the head which rolled me on the turf.

This timely diversion in favour of my enemy was effected by my fellow-gardener, who had followed me up and aided his young master by a swinging stroke of his spade handle. For some moments I scarce knew where I was; then I came to my senses to find myself in a situation which had been a reward to me for a hundred such blows. For my love had flung herself upon the grass beside me, and gathered me into her arms and pillowed my head upon her breast. She was uttering sweet, frightened words, and holding me close to the softest, kindest heart in all the world.

I looked up into her beautiful eyes and smiled, and she drew a long, thankful, quivering breath. Her hair had become unbound, and its dark, perfumed night had fallen over me, shutting out all the world besides her face.

"We are lost," she whispered.

"Nay," I whispered back, "I will swim the moat."

"Then do not move," she implored, "till you spring for the parapet. We are not two yards from it, and no one is very near."

"What?" said I softly. "Fly, and leave your position unexplained. No, my love, that I will never do."

I put up my lips and she kissed me dearly. Then I raised my head from her bosom and looked steadily upon my foes.

The man who struck me had given the alarm, and, ten yards away, stood Sir John and his son with drawn swords, guarding the southern end, the only open line of retreat. Behind them stood two or three of the servants and between the two parties was Siani, her short, stout figure planted on the ground like a tower, a shining poniard in her hand. I had marked the weapon fly loose—as one notes trifles at such times—when I flung my enemy away, and now I noticed the empty sheath at Jack's belt. I stood up and waved my hand to Siani to stand away. She did so, and Jack promptly covered me with a pistol. Enid sprang before me and the pistol muzzle trembled aside. At a glance I saw I was not yet suspected. My scream of rage when I flew upon Jack had been either unnoticed or inarticulate.

"Put up that pistol," commanded the elder man, sourly. "For my part, I scarce know why we stand here with, naked swords before a base, unarmed groom. A dog-whip well thonged, were nearer his deserts."

The biting scorn in the thin, harsh voice, and hard eyes cowed the son, and Jack, who had recovered from his throttling, returned the pistol to his belt. He was as white as death, his eyes shooting hate at us, his face working convulsively in dreadful jealousy. To be scorned and left, and to see a wretched hind in coarse clothes held close and kissed, and hung over by a sweet lady, certes, it was no easy five minutes for Jack. His father turned his head and looked fixedly on Enid. To my great surprise, the old man seemed moved. His eyes softened and took on a look of pity; his voice, when he spoke, changed indescribably. She seemed to feel what he was going to say, and shrank and clung tighter to me. I, clumsy and slow, could not perceive.

"Ah, mistress," said he, "and I thought you everything that was innocent and good."

"And so she is," I cried hotly. "Never, never in your life, Sir John, held your mind a truer thought."

For an instant all stood rapt and silent. The speech was as unexpected as if a dumb animal had found a voice

Eiffel Tower

It is by concentrating the Lemons in the orchards where they are grown that the Eiffel Tower Lemonade can be supplied at this remarkable price. A 4½d. Bottle of Eiffel Tower Lemonade makes 32 Tumblers (2 Gallons) of most delicious Home-made Lemonade. It is made from the finest Lemons only that the world produces. None genuine unless bearing the Eiffel Tower Trade Mark.

Lemonade

Be sure that you get Eiffel Tower Lemonade when you ask for it, as its great success has brought out inferior imitations that only cause disappointment.

If you cannot get it from your Grocer, send 4½d. to the makers, G. Foster Clark & Co., 115 Eiffel Tower Factory, Maidstone, they will send you a bottle post free by return.

A second bottle will not be supplied by the firm, but must be obtained of Grocers, Chemists, or Stores.

2 Gallons for 4½d.

The firm have adopted the following novel method to induce everybody to try their Lemonade. The first fifty letters opened every day not only have the Lemonade sent by return post, but the stamps are also returned to the fortunate applicants. In this way—

300 BOTTLES ARE GIVEN AWAY WEEKLY.

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Every face was turned on me; hitherto, in their eyes, a mute, wordless clown.

Sir John recovered himself first of all.

"This is no miracle of tongues," he said, dryly. "Who are you, who have been playing a part so successfully? Come, sir, your name and station?"

I made him a low bow, and smiled grimly. My head was bare, for my hat had flown aside as I ran.

"Courtly, too," sneered the old man, "a malignant in hiding. Well, friend, you have played your game out. I never suspected you. Speak!"

"Father, father!" screamed Jack.

"Peace, peace!" cried Sir John, lifting his hand, and surveying me with kindling eye, "as I live, a light breaks across my mind. You are Geoffrey Heathcote."

A loud cry of surprise from the onlookers echoed his words, and Jack fairly hallooed for joy.

"A doomed man!" he called out, and laughed shrilly. "A doomed man! A fearful death, a traitor's death waits for him."

I took no notice of him, but kept my eyes fixed on the elder man.

"Yes Sir John," said I, "Geoffrey Heathcote, and this lady, let me tell you, she has been playing a part, too." In the breathless silence which waited upon my words my voice sounded like that of a man who speaks aloud as he walks alone. "You have been addressing her," I continued, "as Mistress Vaughan. To that name she has a right, for she was born to it. But she has also every claim to another, for when I rescued her from the insulting attentions of your son, I interfered to protect—my wife!"

A loud hum of astonishment burst from the Puritan portion of my audience, and Sir John laid his hand over his mouth, bent down his head, and looked at us long and earnestly. It was now time for me to go but the old man made no move, and everyone waited for him, I, too. At last he took off his hat and made Enid a stiff bow.

"Mistress Heathcote," he said, "I ask your pardon. To use your maiden name was a device for which it were hard to blame you. Geoffrey Heathcote," he went on, turning to me, "I tell you the plain truth when I say that were the warrant I hold against you a private matter touching my own fortunes alone I would tear it in a thousand pieces and fling it to yonder moat."

I bowed and kept a wary eye on Jack who was fingering his pistol hungrily.

"But in that it concerns my duty as a magistrate and a sworn servant of the Commonwealth of England, I have no choice but to execute it, and I will procure you a fair trial."

"And, pending that, Sir John, you will see that no one disturbs my wife in her own house here."

"She shall be safe," said he.

"I thank you," I replied. "That is all I could wish."

Enid, of her own instinct, gently loosed her hold upon me, knowing that the time of my attempt was now come.

"Yield yourself," cried Jack, and flourished his sword. I made a single bound to the top of the low parapet and dived clean into the moat. As I clove the water the sound of a pistol shot rang in my ears, but it was too late, and I was untouched. I swam across under the water, and came up to breathe among a clump of sedges on the further side.

A deep drain emptied itself into the moat within a yard of my head, and I crept into it and waded along till I was beyond pistol shot. Then I climbed out and looked back. Enid was crouched on the parapet, watching eagerly, and I heard her cry of joy as I waved my hand and started to run down the park; for there was need to put my best foot foremost.

My enemies had got to horse, and now swept round the further angle of the house in hot pursuit. I had three hundred yards between me and cover, and I fled for my life A plantation of thickset young ashes lay before me, and I strained every nerve to gain it before my pursuers could come up to me. No law was granted to so obstinate a fugitive, and as I saw the pashed hedge which kept the cattle at bay draw dearer and nearer, I heard shot after shot ring out. The sounds filled me with renewed hope.

I dared not glance behind to see how I stood, but if they had taken to their pistols, it was scarcely likely they expected to run me down in the open. One or two balls whistled pretty nigh, but the best of shots can take no aim on a galloping horse, and I tumbled over the hedge and darted into the wood in safety. Here was no ground for a horse to follow, and knowing the place as I did, I feared no pursuit on foot. I pushed swiftly through the ashes and came to a bridle path, down which I flew at my utmost speed. It led straight to the keeper's cottage and there lay my one chance for escape, Whitesock.

Let me but feel her powerful, springy ribs between my knees again, and they must have nags, beyond anything I ever knew of, who would bring us to book. Ten minutes fast running brought me to the little clearing where the keeper's cottage stood. There was no sign of Whitesock anywhere and I rushed to a wattled hut behind the house. The great bloodhound was fastened to the post of the door to prevent anyone entering, and he leapt upon me as soon as I ventured within length of his tether, almost knocking me down.

"What, Ranger!" I cried, and my voice and his sense of smell convinced him of his mistake, and he crouched at my feet and licked my hand. The door was fastened by a wooden hasp. I withdrew it and went in. A joyful whinny rang through the place, and seeing that Whitesock was loose I called her and hurried to the house.

Here I hoped to furnish myself with some sort of weapons, and I lifted the latch and entered. No one was at home, and I looked eagerly round, but, at first glance, saw nothing which could serve me. Then I espied Ralph's quarter-staff propped in a corner, and seized that, in default of handier weapons. I saw no signs of horse furniture, either, and so scrambled on the mare and rode away barebacked.

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN EVIL PLIGHT.

WHITESOCK was mad with delight to feel herself once more free to gallop away under me, and charged down the ride which led from the keeper's cottage to the open park with great, rearing leaps, swift and light, like a huge hare. Her wild joy and the rushing play of the wind about my temples inspired me with an almost equal excitement. Her tremendous bounds were taken so smoothly and easily that the motion was delightful in the extreme; weeks had passed since I had felt her firm, elastic body playing under me, my hateful mask was thrown aside, and my weary "Dim Saesneg," flung to the winds for ever.

It had been a wonderful screen, but, oh! I can never depict the strain under which I lived to make it good. A hundred and a hundred times during the past few weeks a swift, chance, unthinking command or remark had been uttered to me in English, and a hundred times I had been about to obey or answer, and just caught myself in the nick of time, my heart in my throat. 'Twas a labour of Hercules to feign ignorance of my native tongue, and now the load was removed.

My heart was as light as a feather as I flew along. Where was another horse to match Whitesock and overtake her? Enid, I felt certain, was safe now her position was known. I dared not trust myself with Sir John, or a fair rial would hang me as high as Haman, so long as the law laid down opposition to the Commonwealth Army as treason; but I believed him capable and willing to prevent harm coming to her. I must escape now and hide somewhere, until she could join me with the money Roger had in safe keeping, and then, hey! for *la belle France*, where so many of my friends lay in exile. All this flashed through

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my mind as Whitesock skimmed like a swallow down the narrow ride, and flew out into the open park.

A shrill halloo rang in my ears as I cleared the trees. I looked over my shoulders and saw three horsemen, whom I had out-run and out-ridden, spurring across the grass to cut me off. They had been beating along the edge of the wood, and chance had brought us to a point closer than I expected or wished for.

I sat tight down and guided Whitesock with my knees. She obeyed as another horse with the rein, and I turned her towards a corner of the park where was a gate, the gate which Roger had used to bring her to the keeper's cottage. It might be unlocked, and, if so, I was safe.

This change of direction threw my pursuers out, and Whitesock swiftly left them behind. Five minutes brought us to the gate I sought. It was locked, and all along the park bounds stood the unbroken row of stout oaken pales, ten feet high. I had no time to attempt the forcing or breaking of the lock, for my enemies were too close upon me. I could only turn Whitesock and send her sweeping along, skirting the tall fence and heading for the main gates, as I had been shaping a course at first. Our delay at the side gate had lost much of our lead, but Whitesock began picking it up again at once.

Hitherto it had been a great delight to me that Butley Croft had escaped the rough usages common to Cavalier houses; but now a little dispaling would have served my turn to a wonder, and I had been out in the open country and far away, instead of galloping along behind prison bars.

My pursuers were Sir John and two mounted men attending him, too strong a party for a man armed only with a quarter-staff to turn upon. Away darted the gallant mare, keeping her tremendous pace as easily as if she were ambling on a smooth road, flying by copse and dingle, startling the dappled deer, who fled before her with a smooth, gliding flight no swifter and lighter than her own.

The water which filled my clothes streamed down her sides, streaking the bright satin of her coat with dark stains, and dripping steadily on the grass. So riding, I came near to the avenue and saw a single horseman hastening to set himself in my way. It was Jack Postgate, and he seemed to be returning from the main gates. I could only avoid him by deliberately turning to right or left, and I was not inclined to do so. His pistols had been recharged, for he drew one and pointed it full upon me.

But, as often happens when a man has two pistols in reserve, he was so anxious to get the use of both that he wasted the first shot by firing too soon. He tossed the weapon into the grass and drew another; but the prodigious speed at which Whitesock was bearing down upon him was no help to his nerves, and I felt no fear. I stooped down to her mane as I saw his finger crook on the trigger, and the ball whistled over me. His drawn sword was in his left hand, and he charged it to the right; but I cared nothing for his sword.

I tucked the quarterstaff under my arm, laid it in rest as a man would a lance, and rode upon him like a champion in an old romance of chivalry. I had no saddle to help me, and had to trust to my seat and a handful of Whitesock's mane for a purchase.

As we met, he attempted, by the management of spur and rein, to turn his nag aside and miss my clumsy spear, aiming for a slashing cut as I passed, but the beast was not quick enough, and the quarter-staff took him on the shoulder, and trundled him clean over the tail of his horse. I laughed and rode on, leaving Jack all of a heap on the grass.

I promise you my laughing was ended a minute later when I turned the last bend, and saw the gates shut, and a couple of fellows posted there with muskets which were trained upon me instantly. I had known all along that Sir John was a wary old soldier whom one did not easily outmanœuvre, and I recognised this as a characteristic stroke.

I checked Whitesock, and she stood for a moment while I surveyed the state of affairs at less than forty yards distance.

I was within easy shot, yet they made no offer to fire, and this caution showed the danger of pushing upon them. Sir John's followers had smelt powder on too many battlefields to be held cheaply, and one or other of us would get a bullet, and I was as unwilling it should be Whitesock as myself. I turned aside and swept across the open park once more; they never offered to check my flight, and I saw that I was to be taken alive if possible. The thud of the pursuing steeds came hurrying at my back, and I sent Whitesock along a little faster and glanced over my shoulder.

They were pounding stubbornly along in my wake hoping to corner me somewhere when it would be short work between three men armed with sword and pistol, and one flourishing a quarter-staff. For the first time my heart sank within me as I saw the position in which I stood. A ten-foot paling could not stop me, and escape was easy by climbing; but Whitesock, poor lass, must be left on the wrong side, and I go out into the world on my two feet. I cudgelled my brains for a gap or break anywhere, but I could not call one to mind, nor do I believe one exists.

The last summer of my grandfather's life was spent in overlooking the repaling of the park, the fancy for which had struck him in the spring, and he devoted a whole grove of oaks to the work, and made of it a job to last a hundred years.

I saw no other way or help for it, and struck off towards the south-eastern corner, putting Whitesock to the top of her speed. The park was dotted here with thick clumps of brushwood, and I soon dropped my rear-guard. I wheeled, and showed myself as if racing back towards the house, then, in shelter of a long narrow plantation, turned and went on my former road.

This would throw them out a good ten minutes, for, through a gap, I had seen them riding across to cut me off, as they expected, and so when I came to the barrier I was riding quite alone. Had I had the necessary tools it would have taken an hour or more to make a gap in that huge solid fence sufficient for the mare to pass through, so, with a heavy sigh, I tossed over my quarter staff and prepared to follow.

I gave her a few caresses, then mounted the pales, an easy thing from the inside where the crossbars formed a ladder, dropped to the ground on the other side, and plunged into the heath. I followed the narrow, open strips of grass running between clumps of thorn and bramble and was lost to sight from the park in a moment.

(To be continued.)

Old Mrs. Darly is a pattern of household economy. She says she has made a pair of socks last fifteen years by only knitting new feet to them every winter and new legs to them every other autumn.

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Robinson: "I should want security."

Smith: "What security would satisfy you?"

Robinson (after a moment's thought): "Handcuffs."

A Proposal.—Thomas: "I suppose, Susie, that there comes to every woman, sooner or later, an irresistible yearning to lay her head upon some strong man's shoulder and give vent to the outpourings of a full heart."

Susie (timidly): "Yes, Thomas."

Thomas: "Well, Susie, if you feel that way, my shoulder is at your disposal."

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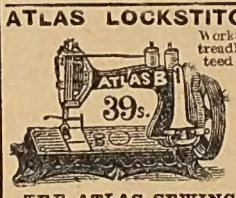

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SHORT TRUTHS.

F. R. G.—Aignes-Mortes, once an important French harbour on the Mediterranean, and from which St. Louis sailed in his crusades of 1248 and 1270, is now miles from the sea, on account of the silt brought down by the canal, and the Government will sell at auction the picturesque ruins of the walls of the port.

A. R.—In Sweden yarn is not allowed to be sold if it contains .0009 per cent. of arsenic. A carpet has been condemned by the inspectors because it contained a 1000th part of a grain of arsenic in sixteen square inches.

Violet.—To clean white straw hats, first wash them with soap and water, rinse them well and dry them in the open air. Beat up the white of an egg and rub well in by means of a piece of clean flannel.

W. B.—There are about ninety deaths in Shakespeare's plays.

D. D.—The Turks are supposed to be the dirtiest nation in Europe, but they are clean compared to the Persians, the dirtiest people in Asia; or to the native inhabitants of Western Zanzibar, the filthiest in Africa; or to the Patagonians, the least cleanly of all the peoples in America.

Pipe.—About fourteen millions are annually spent on tobacco and pipes in the United Kingdom.

Parent.—A child's bed should slope a little from the head to the foot, so that the head may be a little higher than the feet, but never bend the neck to get the head on to a pillow. This makes the child round-shouldered, cramps the veins and arteries, and interferes with the free circulation of the blood. Even when a child is several years old the pillow should be thin and made of hair, and not on any account of feathers.

Crown.—The royal crown of Persia, which dates back to remote ages, is in the form of a pot of flowers, surmounted by an uncut ruby the size of a hen's egg.

Salt.—A mass of 90,000,000 tons of pure, solid, compact rocksalt, located on an island 185 feet high, which rises from a miserable sea-marsh on the route from Brashear to New Iberia, up the River Teche, in Louisiana, is one of the wonders of the world. How this island, which contains over 300 acres of excellent land, ever came into existence in such a locality is a matter of conjecture. Vegetation is prolific, and the scenery is beautiful and varied. In the centre of this island, which is the only solid spot in the vast expanse of sea-marsh for miles around, rises Salt Peak, the largest body of exposed rocksalt in the world.

Sound.—It is a fact that men buried in an avalanche of snow hear distinctly every word uttered by those who are seeking for them, while their most strenuous shouts fail to penetrate even a few feet of snow.

C. R.—The constitution of Costa Rica prescribes hospitality to strangers as a sacred duty, and declares citizenship to be forfeited by ingratitude to parents, abandonment of wife or children, and neglect of the obligations due to the family.

Flo.—Horticulture is taught in the common schools of Germany. The pupils are required to bud, graft, plant seeds, etc., and they are given instructions on the subject of plant growth, adaptation of varieties to soil and climate.

Pro.—The theatres of Paris have popular performances on certain days, when the seats cost only a quarter or half the usual price.

Foot.—A perfectly formed foot should, according to anatomists, be as long as the bone in the forearm, which extends from the elbow to the joint of the wrist. This seems to be abnormally long in a tall person, but is the measurement taken by artists. Of course, arms are sometimes out of proportion, being far too short for the general height, but it is rare that an arm is too long for the stature of a person.

G. I. R.—For the hide of a full-grown giraffe, greatly sought after in Africa for whip and sandal making, the native hunters get from £3 to £5.

Head.—Where Great Britain has 27 cattle on a given area, Ireland has 49, and Denmark 38. Ireland has 864 cattle for every 1,000 of her people, but Great Britain has 188 head of horned stock for every 1,000 inhabitants.

Tongue.—The English and Chinese languages are the only two among all those known that class inanimate objects as of the neuter gender. Some languages, like the German, have a neuter gender, but it is used indiscriminately for animate and inanimate objects.

Baby.—It would take up too much space to tell you all the notions prevalent about babies. In Spain the infant's face is swept with a pine-tree bough to bring good luck. In Ireland a belt made of woman's hair is placed about the child to keep harm away. Garlic, salt, bread, and steak are put into the cradle of a new-born babe in Holland. Roumanian mothers tie red ribbons round the ankles of their children to preserve them from harm.

Egg.—The animal that lays the greatest number of eggs at a time is the white ant of tropical countries, which, according to a high authority, produces 86,400 each day during the season.

P. R.—You cannot brush the head too often, for the oftener it is done the more healthy will be the skin, and thus keeping the hair in good condition. Thus brushing attains two objects—health of the skin of the head and strength of the hair.

Horse.—Russia is estimated to own one-half of the horses of the world.

Pest.—A great dish at Egyptian harem-feasts is that of a lamb roasted whole. After the manner of a nest of Chinese boxes, each smaller than the other, the lamb is stuffed with a whole turkey, the turkey with a chicken, the chicken with a pigeon, the pigeon with a quail, and the quail with a becafico, the smallest bird known except the humming-bird. The lamb is roasted over a slow fire until it is almost ready to fall to pieces.

I. J.—The small letter "i" was formerly written without the dot. The dot was introduced in the fourteenth century to distinguish "i" from "e" in hasty and indistinct writing. The letter "i" was originally used where "j" is now employed. The distinction between "i" and "j" was introduced by the Dutch printers at a comparatively recent date, and the "j" was dotted because the "i," from which it was derived, was written with a dot.

G. L.—Quite right. The wide utilisation of waterfalls for the generation of power has suggested to a French engineer the title of white coal.

Word.—There are now over 250,000 words in the English language, acknowledged by the best authorities. Yet there are people who long to use nearly that number when they hit their thumb with a hammer.

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The Perfection of Toilet Soaps.

DAINTIEST, RICHEST, AND CREAMIEST.

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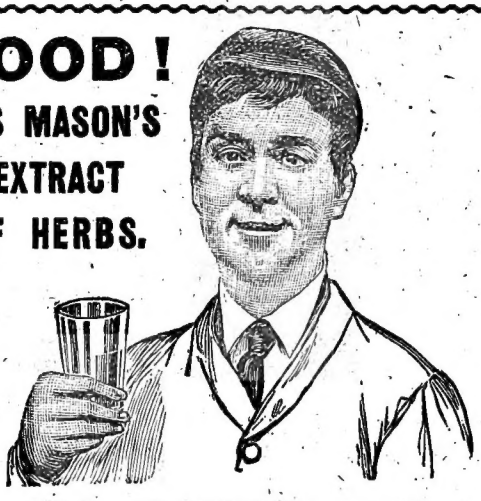

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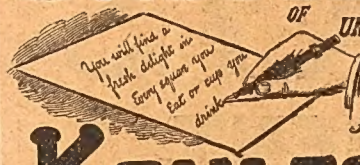

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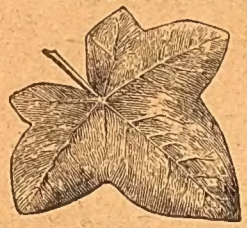

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